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IN THIS ISSUE

THE SECRETS REVEALED

By Robert West

Page 3

HOW TO ARGUE WITH A RED-HEADED WOMAN

By Flora C. Perkins

Page 5

FUNDITS OR PARROTS

By Robert Ohnmacht

Page 6

STAGE FRIGHT SUFFERER STRIKES BACK

By Ronald Burnight

Page 7

HOW TO MEET UNEXPECTED SPEECH SITUATIONS

By Howard W. Runkel

Page 9

AND THAT REMINDS ME OF . . .

By David Lyndon Woods

Page 11

CONFESS!

By Edward H. Klevans

Page 13

ONE MAN'S OPINION

Page 16

HOW TO THINK CREATIVELY

By Harold J. O'Brien

Page 17

WHAT SHALL I TALK ABOUT . . . ?

By John K. Brillhart

Page 19

THE WIND OF CONTROVERSY

By Harold R. Hogstrom

Page 21

OUR TONGUE-TIED DEMOCRACY

By A. Whitney Griswold

Page 29

WALKERS ALL: OUR HUMAN DESTINY

By Robert T. Oliver

Page 31

WHAT ABOUT THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH?

By Ruth R. Haun

Page 34

DON'T MISS

these ARTICLES in the JANUARY issue

"But Do the Dogs Like It?"

An approach to audience-analysis,
by DR. DAVID C. PHILLIPS.

"Three Steps to Success for the Technical Speaker" by FRANCIS E. X. DANCE.

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THE SECRETS REVEALED—

By Robert West

Masterful spoofing by the Director of Brooklyn College's Speech Clinic and co-author of *The Rehabilitation of Speech*.

DEAR EDITOR:

I AM NOW TAKING A STEP that may cause my dismissal from the guild of teachers of speech. I may also be boiled in oil, or at least be tortured by having my effigy pierced with pins. But, my conscience can no longer be stifled.

It has long been known that all the knowledge about speech-making has been jealously guarded and monopolized by the members of the faculties of departments of speech of the colleges and universities, and that, because of this restriction of information, no really effective speaking has been done except by those who have been trained in these departments, and except also, of course, by the members of these departments.¹

I deem it proper that the proprietary right to this valuable lore should cease. Hence I am giving it to the world, God and the Editor willing, in a condensed form. I have spent over 30 years in association with these guild members and I have learned their secrets. Here they are in brief.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF SPEECH

The mental and emotional factors to be kept in mind in preparing a speech are: (1) motivation, (2) personal exemptions and deductions, (3) alcoholic content, and (4) the total yardage of the first nine holes. Some people substitute for the yardage the dues to the country club; but it amounts to the same thing; the greater the one, the greater the other.

In assessing these factors certain results of research should be taken into consideration. It has been found that, if a strong Democratic² speech is delivered to an audience half Democrats and half Republicans³, the approval meter will show a 50% rating for the speech. Further research is under way to determine if that rating is a response from the Democrats or from the Republicans.

THE ANATOMICAL BASIS OF SPEECH

It is as necessary to the speaker to know his instrument as for the organist to know his. No one can make

a good speech who does not know the parts of the body whose movements make the sounds. I can give an example here: The larynx is made up of five cartilages: the thyroid, the mastoid, the asteroid, the tabloid, and the paranoid. In low pitches the masto-tabloid muscles are contracted; while in high pitches, obviously, the contraction involves the paranoid and asteroid musculature. Another example: The ossicles of the ear are the (1) hammer, (2) chisel, and (3) screw-driver. The hammer is called the *malleus*, or *maul*. It is this bonelet that enables one to get the punch line of a joke in the locker-room at the club. The chisel, or cuneiform cartilage, transmits market reports, and the screw-driver is tuned to any frequency above 87 proof.

Without a knowledge of these osteolas one cannot possibly hear accurately what his opponent in a debate is saying. I knew a young woman of voting age who could not speak a word, nor understand one either. Just for an experiment we showed her pictures of the larynx and of the ear, naming the cartilages and ossicles. In three weeks she could say *Methodist Episcopal Church* as well as, if not better than, most general paralytics.

THE LITERARY BASIS OF SPEECH

One of the most insidious elements in the propaganda of deception practiced to keep secret the information that is the stock-in-trade of the speech departments is that the would be orator should model his speeches after certain well known examples. The College teachers foster this misconception, usually selecting, however, such exemplars as Confucius, Charlamagne, and Lincoln, who never studied in a speech department. This is one of the reddest herrings that was ever drawn across any trail. Take the Gettysburg remarks: "Four score and seven years ago our forefathers brought forth on this continent a new nation". Now, how redundant and periphrastic can you get? By both etymology and definition *nation* is a bringing forth or bearing. Lincoln's sentence is like saying that three years ago, come Shrove Tuesday of next year, a bearing was born. But wait a minute; who bore this bearing? Our mothers? No, our fathers! How did that mixture get so badly metaphored? Clearly the speaker must have meant the maternal giving of birth, since he had available to him the poetic, biblical word *begot* to express the male function in generation. Why did he reject it? (Except for the Police Gazette, the Bible was Lincoln's complete literary diet.) Oh, I see. It is explained farther on in

¹ Jaynes *Fighting Ships*, 1956 is the authority for the statement that, of the 128 outstanding orators of the United States, 121 were chairmen of departments of speech.

² Etymology: *demon* + *crater*, probably meaning a spewing forth of devils.

³ Etymology: *re* (again) + *pub* (a drinking place) + *like*, probably meaning a spiritual renaissance or a return to alcoholic chronicity.

the sentence: "Conceived in liberty." Well, that figures! No, we can't use Lincoln as an example. Go to the senate and listen to the remarks by our college graduates!

Senator from Oregon (reading from manuscript): ". . . the blessed angels, filling their golden chalices from the effulgence of the milky way . . ."

Senator from Pennsylvania: "Will the Senator yield?"

Senator from Oregon: "For what purpose, Senator?"

Senator from Pennsylvania: "To suggest a trade, Senator."

Senator from Oregon: "Gladly Senator; what is your deal?"

Senator from Pennsylvania: "The Senator from Pennsylvania will be glad to vote for the tiling of the men's room of the post office at Umpqua, Oregon, if the Senator from Oregon will vote for the bill soon to be referred out of the committee providing for a bronze martin-house on the post office at Bird-in-Hand, Pennsylvania."

Senator from Oregon: "Check, Senator, and double check."

Now, that is effective speaking!

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL BASIS OF SPEECH

Another *must* for the speaker is to know the physiology of the articulatory, phonatory, and dilatory parts, especially those of respiration, esophagation, and condensation. Take, for example, respiration. When the ovulum reacts to the in-rushing air, the Du Bois Raymond coil flocculates into the commissura; but on expiration for speech it is the mussena that discharges via the infundin and the Girdle of Gifford. Think of trying to make a speech without knowing this essential mechanism of the process of breathing for speech!

THE PHONETIC BASIS OF SPEECH

There are literally thousands of pronunciations that are variant, and disputed, as heard from the lips of lay speakers. Now in every case of dispute there is a one correct form. The professors of speech know these forms, but they do everything to foster the confusion.

The more the public is confused, the greater the dependency upon the professors. Take the word *tissue*, for example. The pedagogues know that the only acceptable pronunciation of that word is to have it rhyme with *is you*. But they even go so far as to appear to differ on this matter, in conversation at the club, per chance, one professor saying that the word rhymes with *dish you* and another that it sounds like *kiss you*. When they get the public thoroughly intimidated, the professors have a clear field for their own speaking.

Before one can understand phonetics and learn to talk it, one must know the phoneticometric system. All speech sounds are measured in *disquisids*. A *sid* is the shortest possible, observable length of phonetic time. A *sid* is therefore the ultimate indivisible unit of phonetic mensuration. A *quisid* is $\frac{1}{6}$ of a *sid*. A *disquisid* equals two *quisids*. One might deduce from this that a *disquisid* is $\frac{1}{3}$ of a *sid*; but we must remember the postulate of the Marquis de Oliver, who held that the whole is *not* the sum of its parts. The following table illustrates the phoneticometric system.

Sounds	Number of Disquisids	Nature of the Sound
b	2	libate
p	3.1416	crinoid
m	$\sqrt{2}$	labio-esophageal
i	6 to 9	presbyopic
t	.004	purulent
n	1.4 ²	metronomic

In closing I wish to encourage all would be orators to put into practice these secrets here revealed. With this information it is absolutely unnecessary for one to study in a department of speech. In six weeks the do-it-yourself student will be able to speak as well as an instructor; in six months, as well as an assistant professor; in two years, as well as an associate professor; in four years, as well as a full professor; and in six years the department chairman of the local college will be trembling in his *disquisids*, fearful of losing his job.

MORE ADVICE ON 'HOW TO WIN FRIENDS'

Senator Lyndon Johnson, of Texas, astute and popular leader of the Democratic majority in the U. S. Senate, has drawn up ten rules on how to get people to like you. What would your list be?

"1. Learn to *remember names*. Inefficiency at this point may indicate that your interest is not sufficiently outgoing.

"2. Be a *comfortable* person so there is no strain in being with you. Be an *old-shoe, old-hat* kind of individual.

"3. Acquire the quality of relaxed *easy-going* so that things do not ruffle you.

"4. Don't be egotistical. Guard against the impression that *you know it all*.

"5. Cultivate the quality of being *interesting* so people

will get something of value from their association with you.

"6. Study to get the '*scratchy*' elements out of your personality, even those of which you may be unconscious.

"7. Sincerely attempt to heal, on an honest Christian basis, every *misunderstanding* you have had or now have. *Drain off your grievances*.

"8. Practice *liking people* until you learn to do so genuinely.

"9. Never miss an opportunity to say a word of *congratulation* upon anyone's achievement, or *express sympathy* in sorrow or disappointment.

"10. Give *spiritual strength* to people, and they will give *genuine affection* to you."

How to Argue With a Red-Headed Woman

By Flora C. Perkins

As the wife of a stimulating Professor of Speech (Lindsey Perkins, Ph.D., Northwestern, at Brooklyn College), Mrs. Perkins generously shares with the menfolk some of the secrets of persuasion that probably originated with Eve.

IF YOU WANT TO LOSE AN ARGUMENT, argue with a red-headed woman," goes an old saying. This is no pretty compliment to the logic of Titan-haired ladies. It propounds the theory that the fire inside is expressed by the flame on top, and any man so unwise as to stir up a conflagration may expect to be consumed by it.

There is an ancient account of a famous Irish Hero who had a beautiful, but peppery, red-headed wife. At the times when he saw a need to discuss some domestic affair or other with her, he would stuff his ears with wool, make a prayer to his patron saint, imbibe the proper amount of good Irish whiskey, find a stout shillelagh, and set out for home. It was reported that on a few occasions he won an argument.

This method is a troublesome one; then, too, all men are not heroes. There is a way of winning an argument with a red-headed woman that has nothing to do with lethal weapons, the use of magic, or selling one's soul to the devil. It is a small matter of considering the nature of fire. One does not ordinarily throw a bucket of gasoline on live coals to extinguish them.

Consider a question that is liable to pop up to disrupt the peace of countless American homes: Does the lady of the house need a new fur coat? The proposition is rarely, if ever, stated. The wife greets her husband at the door with tender solicitude, feeds him his favorite viands, and sees him settled in comfort with the sports section before she begins, somewhat along these lines: "Darling, I went shopping today with Sandra Jones. I felt terribly shabby in my old tweed coat. She is always so beautifully dressed, especially since her husband gave her that lovely mink coat for Christmas."

The word *mink* is calculated to bring any husband's mind to full attention on the subject, so she may continue, "I know we can't afford mink, and I wouldn't even consider it. But the most wonderful thing happened! I practically stumbled over a sale of Persian lamb coats. Everyone agrees that you just can't go wrong with Persian lamb. They're putting it aside for me until noon tomorrow. I can't wait for you to see it! It really does something for me. Darling, you do want me to have a lovely fur coat — one that we can afford — don't you?"

Let no man quibble over the point that there never was any logic to women's clothes. The speaker for the affirmative presented her case with psychological acumen, according to the precepts of her sex. She aimed

at the basic drives of self-respect and pride (pride in her, pride in himself as a provider), competition, and love.

At this stage a pyretic discussion would be imminent no matter what the color of the lady's hair. A husband can do one of three things. He can write out a check for the full amount and go back to his paper. He can rise, with cannons primed, to meet the challenge. If his wife is red-headed though, he should take a quick look to make sure his accident policy is up-to-date before attempting to resolve the issues by snarling: "Who cares about Sandra Jones? I don't see anything wrong with your old coat. Do you think I'm made of money?" Or, he can, like an able fire fighter, build fire trenches and back-fires. In this case it should mean disregarding (and I underscore) *everything* he has learned about logic and concentrating on what he has learned in his persuasion courses.

A good strategem for an opening attack might be an appeal to the ego. "Honey, everything you've ever worn, you look good in to me!" (He'd better mean it, in large part. There is nothing that will stir a woman's wrath quicker than an ineptly insincere compliment from her spouse. Strawberry blondes tend to be extraordinarily sensitive in this respect, my researchers report, and will melt in tears, or go off like nuclear fission at the drop of a nuance.) The man might enlarge on the appeal to the ego, and then adroitly switch to a plea of poverty — that is, provided he has not made any recent purchases of fly-rods, golfing equipment, or out-board motors.

By far, the most reliable of all methods is to face up squarely and meet her on her own ground: "Glad you had a nice day shopping, dear.¹ Sandra is kind of a lame-brain, though. Nothing to her but clothes.² Poor old Sam Jones! Does nothing but hop from one debt to another with an expensive female like Sandra always nagging at him. I'm lucky to have a wife with a sense of values.³ Depend on you to run down a bargain. — Persian lamb, hummm? You are sure it's a good buy? I know you are awfully hard to fool. But sometimes they do put old skins into some of these quick-sale fur

¹ A good husband should be sympathetic toward his wife's incomprehensible ways of entertaining herself.

² No woman will object to having her best friend belittled by a man as long as there are no reflections cast on *her*, personally.

³ To a woman such comparisons are not odious.

businesses.⁴ It would be embarrassing for me to have Sam Jones know I let my wife go around in cheap stuff.⁵ Somehow I just can't see you in Persian lamb, either. Mink, now, with that gorgeous hair of yours!⁶ If you are absolutely set on the Persian lamb, go ahead. I'll never be able to look at it without thinking that in a few years, maybe we could have . . ."

And that's the idea. *Per suasio* — through sweetness. Even though the little woman might dash out and buy herself a new tweed coat, it's still a victory. What wo-

man can resist sweetness? Unless she, too, has had a good course in persuasion. In that case, *vae victis!* A man who meets a red-headed woman in a persuasion class and lets her persuade him to marry her deserves his woe.

⁴ This requires delicate handling. Doubt must be cast on the shopkeeper's integrity without hinting that she could be mistaken about the merchandise.

⁵ She will promptly decide she'd rather die than have Sandra consider her clothes "cheap".

⁶ What woman can't see herself in mink!

PUNDITS OR PARROTS?

By Robert Ohnmacht

A student in the Electrical Technology curriculum of the Associate Degree program at the Wilkes-Barre Center of The Pennsylvania State University challenges a current fad.

RECENTLY I CAME ACROSS A VOCABULARY TEST in a popular magazine. The author explained that this test had been given to people in various job classifications — from truck drivers to college professors — and that a certain average score had been tabulated for each occupation. He went on to explain that since each occupation could be distinguished by a certain vocabulary range, the score made in this test would indicate the chances of success in a chosen field. It was further hinted that if your score was low, compared to the standard score for your occupation, merely "boning up" on your vocabulary would increase your chances for advancement.

Now a large vocabulary is definitely an asset to anyone, but I wonder if in graphing a man's occupation as a result of his vocabulary we are not putting the cart before the horse? After all, is a person engaged in a particular occupation because he possesses a certain vocabulary, or does he acquire a particular vocabulary because he is engaged in a certain occupation? In other words, which is the constant and which is the variable, and does the attainment of one necessarily guarantee the attainment of the other?

Most college professors, besides possessing a large vocabulary, eventually end up wearing glasses. Can we logically conclude, then, that one of the factors responsible for the success of these learned men is poor eyesight? If so, then any short-cut that places a severe strain upon the eyes — such as reading Mickey Spillane in very dim light — should help us to qualify for a professorship. The fallacy in this analysis is obvious, yet many people employ exactly the same line of reasoning to reach the conclusion that vocabulary alone is one of the factors responsible for success and that by committing to memory long lists of isolated words they immediately increase their chances for advancement.

I know a man whose heaviest labor is signing for relief checks once a week, yet he can spout words like "obsequious," "parsimonious," or "meretricious" in correct context without batting an eyelash. This "erudite"

fellow reaches the pinnacle of success once each month when he storms the vocabulary section of the *Reader's Digest* and triumphantly selects the correct synonyms. His conversation, brilliantly bolstered by all sorts of verbose padding, runs the whole gamut of provocative subjects — from the score of last night's ball game to the odds on the fight next week. In short, he dresses two-cylinder ideas in twelve-cylinder language, yet any vocabulary test that graphs a person's intelligence as a result of his vocabulary would certainly qualify this person to be president of any large corporation or college in the country.

It seems to me that a large vocabulary is not *responsible* for success, but that it *indicates* success. And it indicates success because it indicates a broadened intellectuality developed over the years by coming into contact with complex ideas phrased in complex language. In assimilating the ideas one acquires the language, and thus a test indicating the scope of one's vocabulary should also indicate the scope of one's intellectual background and development. "Boning up" on vocabulary may eliminate any language deficiency, but no amount of last minute cramming can overcome a deficiency in intellectual background. Words without ideas, although sometimes very amusing, are really useless.

But if we agree that to enlarge our vocabulary by learning the meanings of isolated words is a poor substitute for a vocabulary obtained through extensive contact with complex ideas, should we ignore this method altogether? Not at all, for a large vocabulary — no matter how obtained — is still preferable to a small one. However, when building a vocabulary in this manner, it should be kept in mind that a large vocabulary alone is simply a means to an end and not an end in itself. It is the key that enables us to comprehend more fully the things we read and hear. Whether we use this key to open new doors to knowledge and opportunity, or whether we are simply content to spout high-sounding words in correct context is something that no vocabulary test alone can indicate.

A Stage Fright Sufferer Strikes Back

By Ronald Burnight

Mr. Burnight reaches into his own experiences, to fortify what he learned in graduate research, to send us from Chico, California, some down-to-earth advice on a tender subject.

I AM AN EXPERT ON STAGE FRIGHT. When I say this I don't mean that I have done a study on the subject (although I have); I mean that at the mere mention of the words *audience* or *stage* I can work up more ticks, quivers, and shakes than a hootch dancer in a blizzard.

As I have indicated, I have done a study on stage fright, and it was during this study that two facts struck me rather forcibly. (1) I didn't find a single article written from the stage fright sufferer's point of view, or even by a person likely to be a severe stage fright sufferer. (2) I would guess that about 99% of the remedies offered are logical in nature, while the problem is an emotional one. This is very poor psychology. It has also occurred to me, judging from the logical nature of the "remedies," that there must be a large semantic gulf between the severe stage fright sufferer and those writing about it. To the teacher of speech, who is unlikely to have ever been a severe stage fright sufferer, stage fright is nothing more than a vague nervousness. To the severe stage fright sufferer, stage fright is almost (and sometimes literally) a paralyzing fear. The words *stage fright*, then, do not have the same meaning to both parties. This is, to some degree, reinforced by a recent study which showed that speech teachers and judges tend to underestimate the degree of fear in the speaker.¹

An example of the logical approach to stage fright is my own study on the subject. This was based on the theory that stage fright is a fear of the unknown, and that by studying it I would magically lose the fear. The result has been that I can now quote all kinds of theories; I know all sorts of cures (including a semantics approach and hypnotism); and I know exactly why I shake and quiver, why my mouth goes dry and my vocal cords tighten up, why I break into a cold sweat, and why my heart and lungs are operating at top speed. I tell myself, "Burnight, you're excreting too much adrenalin and thyroxin," but my endocrine glands, being highly uncooperative, go right on excreting, and I go right on quivering and shaking. My endocrine glands, unfortunately, can't read.

I have been told not to take myself so seriously, to be impersonal and to concentrate on what I am saying. Sometimes they even quote a little doggeral at me to prove their point.

*A centipede was happy quite
Until a frog in fun
Said, "Pray, which leg comes after which?"
This raised her mind to such a pitch
She lay distracted in a ditch
Considering how to run.*

Besides this being lousy poetry, I would like to point out that it is rather difficult not to think of your knees when they are making more noise than your vocal cords. I have had the feeling that if I didn't concentrate on holding them erect I would probably fall down.

I have been told to think of public speaking as only enlarged conversation. This is a good statement, but there is only one trouble; enlarged conversation is what I'm afraid of.

I have also been told about myriads of others who have suffered from stage fright, ranging from Cicero to Charlie Chaplin. Here, again, I think we have the semantics problem. It has also occurred to me that actors who suffer from stage fright must have a masochistic tendency to enjoy this sort of stimulation. I also think that this approach does not take into account the highly subjective nature of the problem. When I am standing before an audience with my knees clacking together like a pair of castanets, I really don't care if Cicero or Charlie Chaplin suffered from stage fright.

I have also been told that stage fright can be a boon and that the problem is to control it. You're telling me! As I said before, if I didn't control it, I would probably fall down.

Another one of the pet theories that I have been told and that seems to have been handed down for generations is the idea that stage fright is caused by lack of preparation, or, at least, inadequate preparation. This is not true. While it is true that you can't give a good performance without preparation, preparing well doesn't necessarily guarantee that you will not suffer from stage fright. This would only be true if the fright did come from unpreparedness, or if the sufferer were afraid of his subject. Unfortunately, the sufferer is usually afraid of the audience or, at least, a combination of audience-subject. I know of a student who practiced diligently for three days, then got up, walked to the front of the room, threw his notes into the waste basket and returned to his seat. Unfortunately, stage fright is not such a simple thing that we can attribute all cases

to one cause and thereby solve them with one cure-all solution aimed at this one cause.

From time to time I have also been told to remember that the audience wants me to succeed, that I should act the part of a speaker and bluff my way through, that I should remember my past successes, and the list could go on indefinitely. I feel that to attribute cures to these platitudes would be just as ridiculous as to attribute the cure of a broken leg to a pair of crutches. However, I can't see that they do any harm, and they may actually be of some benefit in bolstering the morale in the period just before appearing before the audience.

Now then, I don't want to give the impression that I still suffer to the same degree that I have indicated, although I do, occasionally, have relapses. I have improved, and I attribute my improvement to only one thing, practice.

However, I do not mean just any kind of practice. Practice can be good or bad. The type of practice that I am referring to is the type that has, strangely enough, grown out of two divergent theories. The Guthrie negative adaptation theory² and the Lomas theory that stage fright is the inability to organize oneself³ are both based on the idea of going from the simple to the complex. Guthrie's idea is that we should go from small audiences (perhaps even children) to large audiences, and that we must unlearn the idea that public performance is unpleasant by making these performances successful and pleasant. The Lomas theory stresses that we should not emphasize too much material at any one time, but should work from the simple to the complex

in any one of three different areas: delivery (which includes eye contact, gestures, voice, etc.), content of speech (research, outlining, etc.), or the different speaking situations (conversation, discussion, debate, etc.).

I feel that structured practice of either of these types, or possibly a combination of the two, will cure stage fright without the instructor necessarily knowing the specific cause of the fright. Of course, if any cue for stage fright is apparent, such as poor dress, etc., it should be done away with, if possible.

Also, if we agree with the idea that practice is the only real solution to the problem, this, then, implies that the sufferer must be given a lot more practice before groups, the more the better. For the classroom teacher this will undoubtedly mean either longer speech classes or more speaking in the ordinary English class.

Finally, I would like to make it clear that, while structured practice is the basis for overcoming stage fright, we should by no means drop the other practical aids, such as: not memorizing the piece, giving the student something to handle, exercises, etc. However, as these have been mentioned so many times before, I do not feel that it is worthwhile to go into them here.

NOTES

1. Dickens, Milton; Gibson, Francis; and Prall, Caleb, "An Experimental Study Of The Overt Manifestations of Stage Fright," *Speech Monographs*, 1950, 17:37-47.
2. Ullman, Marguerite, "Overcoming Audience Fear," *Music Educator's Journal*, 1940, no. 4, 26:31-32.
3. Lomas, Charles W., "The Psychology Of Stage Fright," *Quarterly Journal Of Speech*, February 1937, 23:35-44, p. 480.

Watching Television

WE AMERICANS spend more than a billion and a half hours each week watching television, according to Dr. Eugene S. Foster, Chairman of the Radio and Television Center of Syracuse University, writing in *The Cameo*, summer, 1957. Then he adds to that total another 230 million hours watching movies on TV. Radio comes in a strong second as a leisure time entertainer, consuming 968 million hours of our collective weekly time. Reading newspapers requires 386 million hours, and magazines are allotted 139 million hours.

This means that if you are Mr. and Mrs. Typical American, you are presumed to be spending about nine hours and ten minutes every week watching "live" TV programs and an additional hour and three-quarters on TV movies. Meanwhile, you are listening to the radio for five and three-quarters hours (could this be

in your car, on the way to and from work?). And you get in two hours and forty-five minutes reading newspapers and forty-five minutes on magazines. As for the time spent reading books, Dr. Foster sayeth not.

Now who can provide us a solid estimate on the time spent in talking — in listening — in playing bridge — in raking leaves and other yard chores — and in meditating on the meaning of life? How much time in gossip? In serious study for the enlargement of the mind? What has happened to the old philosophical idea that time is the most precious commodity we human beings possess? What shall we do with all the leisure we'll have when the work week is reduced to thirty hours?

Of a truth, Dr. Foster's figures give us food for thought — that is, if we can find the time.

HOW TO MEET UNEXPECTED SPEECH SITUATIONS

By Howard W. Runkel

Dr. Runkel (Ph.D., Stanford), Professor of Speech at Willamette University, Salem, Oregon, illustrates from his own considerable lecture experience how to meet problems no speaker expects . . . but sometimes encounters.

ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECTS of any speech situation is the possibility of a sudden occurrence of the unexpected. About the only thing the speaker may be sure of on any occasion is that he cannot be sure of anything. With this truth in mind I propose to state my ideas on how a speaker may adapt to the unexpected.

Recently my carefully kept office records indicated that I had delivered my 350th public address since arriving in the Northwest to teach in 1950. This experience convinces me that nearly all of the unforeseen occurrences affecting the speaker fall into one of the following classifications, labelled according to origin: I. "Acts of God"; II. Careless Programming; and III. Inept Introductions.

I "ACTS OF GOD"

This term so often used in the insurance field seems appropriate to cover those situations that no reasonable foresight might have anticipated. Possible circumstances are infinitely varied: The speaker may arrive late due to a breakdown in transportation; he may be forced to adapt by delivering only a summary of his prepared address. The chairman becomes ill; the speaker may have to rise and present himself and his credentials if nobody else volunteers more than his name to the waiting audience. Motorboats roar up and down a river on the shores of which a holiday ceremonial is being conducted; the speaker must employ his maximum vocal volume and projection, making full use of gestures and movement to get his ideas across. The caterer provides the food an hour late, due to the unnoticed advent of daylight saving time; the speaker must accommodate the audience by presenting his message before dinner. Speaking *before* eating, incidentally, might not be unwise for all mealtime affairs. Surely the prevailing custom violates the old saying that "when the stomach is full the head is empty!"

All the above situations I have encountered in the past; my memory of them is by no means entirely unpleasant.

I recall one occasion when the fuel supply for both heating and cooking was cut off by neighboring excavators only two hours before a large audience convened for lunch. A downtown restaurant was quickly engaged to truck food out to the auditorium and I found myself

speaking over the din of busy silverware to a roomful of moving hands and arms and downward cast eyes. Raising the voice and consciously trying to heighten the "I-you" approach helped to communicate in this instance, I believe.

A most memorable and unexpected experience occurred some years ago just moments before I was introduced to 150 Rotarians. Two waitresses collided behind my chair and a huge pot of warm coffee spilled down my neck, thoroughly discoloring my light suit and filling one shoe. It seemed no time to cry over spilled coffee and the audience apparently appreciated the opening statement — "I have really been overwhelmed by the warmth of your welcome."

A readiness to accommodate, a light touch, above all the manifestation of good will — these ought to be the ingredients in a speaker's reaction to unexpected situations beyond the control of those present.

II CARELESS PROGRAMMING

Many pages have been written and thousands of cartoons drawn about speakers who habitually fail to conform to a time limit. More needs to be published concerning organizations and committees who are guilty of the sin of poor timing of programs. Two situations are especially typical. Each is a trial to the speaker not only because it impinges upon the time allotted to him but for the reason that it fatigues the audience even before he has been presented.

First is the overloaded program. In its effort to provide a stimulating evening, the committee may have imported not one but several musicians for two or more selections each. Encores, however delightful, take additional time. Then, incredible as it may seem, another speaker is presented — probably because one member of the program committee has acted without consulting the others.

I recall being on hand to address an audience in California when a business meeting and the musical numbers consumed an hour and a half. To my amazement and frustration at this point, two local high school forensic teams were introduced to present a full-length debate on the current proposition. The room was blue with cigar smoke on that humid evening and the audience was obviously not listening to the debate. Aware that anything I might say that late in the night would

fall on deaf ears, I rose and left after making my reasons clear to both the embarrassed president of the organization and the committee member who had engaged my services. I am informed that the group has been extremely careful about program lengths and providing speakers an early hearing since that time.

A second situation occurs most frequently in the noontime meeting groups. Here the members expect the program to be over at a prescribed time. This is usually one or one-fifteen o'clock, after which the members must be back at work. If speakers are customarily asked to address the club for 20 minutes, it follows that they must be introduced from 20 to 25 minutes before the time set for adjournment.

A few years ago I was invited to address a luncheon audience for "thirty minutes or so." Experience has taught me that the "or so" means "preferably somewhat less." I anticipated presenting my ideas in twenty minutes. Needless to say, I was apprehensive when the ill-planned program dragged up to the time of my own participation. This was no more than four minutes before what I had been told was the latest permissible time for adjournment. In the fourth minute of my remarks the chairman hit a gong and rasped "time's up." He succeeded in cutting off my address but not my impromptu comments about his discourtesy. The spontaneous remarks of many in the group afterwards assured me that I had not talked out of line.

Unexpected situations arising out of careless or irresponsible programming can often be reduced, I am convinced, by the speaker himself. Instead of suffering in silence he should enlighten the group about its reasonable obligations toward invited guests. His words will usually carry more weight than the criticism of a local member.

III INEPT INTRODUCTIONS

Of all the "unexpected" situations confronting the speaker the defective introduction is unfortunately the most frequently encountered. One reason for this is obvious to anybody who has spoken on the "creamed chicken and peas circuit," — that oft-used term which lumps together the noontime audiences which meet weekly. These lively assemblies often have what is called a "program chairman of the day." This practice is commendable in that it democratizes the opportunity for club members to get on their feet and speak out, if only briefly. From the point of view of the speaker of the day, however, the custom is occasionally questionable. His chairman may be totally inexperienced in the art of making public introductions and is therefore nervous, even panicky. I have observed some who ignore their food, preferring to spend their meal time begging the speaker in advance to excuse what they assure him will be a "fouled-up introduction." Without letup they ply him with irrelevant questions and scribble down verbatim his answers on large sheets of paper already crowded with writing.

The big moment arrives — the chairman of the day is on his feet. He stammers out a presentation of the

speaker that bears little resemblance to the information he has just been given. The speaker's name is often mispronounced, or even omitted; alma maters are misnamed; "college" and "university" are used interchangeably; names of organizations are snarled; professional titles are confused beyond recognition; praise is contrived; attempts at humor are painful. The final indignity may be either a misreading of the speaker's topic or failure to announce it at all.

Now the speaker is finally before the audience. If, as the Ancients expressed it, "a work well begun is a work half done," then his task is made much more difficult by the inaccuracies and omissions of the chairman. Quickly the speaker must decide which misstatements were vital enough to require correction. Often modest humor will help put the record straight. The breathless opening exclamation: "Well! — after *that* introduction I can hardly wait to hear what I'm going to say" seems to satisfy everybody, strange as it may seem to speech people who are understandably blasé about well-used openers. On one matter I prefer to be particular. This is the pronunciation of the speaker's name. Here is a mighty important noun to any person; and "Davis" for "Davies" or "Harvey" for "Hervey" should not go uncorrected. The revision may be softened by a humorous reference to even more gross mispronunciations heard in the past.

Of introductions that are fundamentally accurate but overlong, little need be said. Happily, these are less frequently encountered than the type discussed above. Except for taking precious time from the speaker and his audience they do most harm to the chairman himself. The speaker may be forced to adapt by cutting short his own preliminary remarks with the explanation that "not as much time remains as I should have expected." He may think ahead while addressing the group to the supports for his principal points. Usually an item or two may be deleted without impairing the development of his ideas.

The natural recommendation coming out of the foregoing discussion is that organizations should make available to all prospective chairmen of the day model speeches of introduction with a consideration of appropriate rules for performing this vital duty effectively. Such aids would build up the confidence of these chairmen, to say nothing of smoothing out the program and giving the speaker the kind of sendoff he deserves. Until this is done, or the custom of featuring "chairmen of the day" is abandoned, the faulty introduction will remain the most-to-be-expected "unexpected situation" on many speakers' lists.

CONCLUSION

The element of the unexpected lends glamor to public speaking. Whether he likes it or not, it may seize the spotlight from the principal speaker. An empirical discussion of this topic should enrich an elementary speech course for students whose fear of "what might happen" before or during their presentation is too often unnecessarily worrisome.

AND THAT REMINDS ME OF . . .

By David Lyndon Woods

Mr. Woods, one of our contributors whom we are glad to welcome back, offers practical advice on how to use humor so the audience will laugh with (not at) the speaker.

THE DINNER WAS FINISHED. Cigars were lit. The speaker of the evening was in full swing: "And that reminds me of a story. It seems there was a minister, a priest, a rabbi, and a revivalist sharing adjoining staterooms on the *Queen Mary*, and at breakfast the first day at sea. . . ."

Familiar? Certainly. Common? Definitely. Well-done? Well . . . hardly ever.

Most speakers would like to add humor to their speeches. This is a valid aim. Humor helps ally the speaker with his audience. Humor provides welcome variety. Humor gives a lift to a point, which may aid in making it memorable.

An eminent professor, one of the few individuals I can honestly term "a gentleman and a scholar," was noted for peppering his lectures and discussions with various barbs which could be loosely categorized as humor. Since otherwise this man was somber to the point of austerity, his classroom efforts at levity continually raised questions in the minds of his students. During the last session of a graduate seminar, one student asked the professor about his use of humor. The professor replied, "I'm glad you asked that question, since I know many of you intend to teach. In over forty years of teaching I have discovered only one way to be certain an important point is remembered by all my students, and that is, by presenting it humorously."

Echoing the professor's sentiments are the multitude of speech textbooks. I know of none which does not advocate the effective use of humor in speeches. But that word *effective* is the key. And what happens when most speakers try to employ humor?

The basis of the problem seems to be a misunderstanding of the nature of humor. Enough books have been written on this subject so that their compilation would strain even an IBM computer. In the area of speech humor, however, one conclusion is basic: Speech humor is *not* just a collection of funny stories!

It is easy to see why most people make this error. Recall the countless masters-of-ceremonies, nightclub comedians, toastmasters, and after-dinner speakers who present long series of jokes, and among the more skillful, very effectively. For we like to laugh. But jokes provide laughter for laughter's sake, and little or no information is conveyed. Let us hope that most speakers intend to convey at least some ideas.

Aside from the informational loss brought about by jokes, consider style and delivery. Who are the successful practitioners of the art of joke-telling? There is probably no one individual who can surpass Bob Hope at fast-paced, stand-up, gag comedy. But how suitable is this style for the average man giving a speech? Jack Benny, on the other hand, depends far more often upon the humor of a character or situation than mere words. Mr. Benny seldom tells a "joke" or a "funny story." Few of us possess the physical and vocal dexterity of Mr. Hope, or the comic mind and innate timing of Mr. Benny. Like Mr. Benny, however, all of us have some kind of *character*, and in giving a speech we automatically enter a specific *situation*.

An important business executive employed these techniques combined with adaptation in a recent speech to a banquet of civilian and military engineers. In discussing the restriction which national security inflicts upon normal business advertising, he concluded:

In private business trying to get along without advertising is something like trying to wink at a pretty girl in the dark. You may know what you are doing, but she doesn't!

Turning to the loss of public recognition for workers on classified projects, he recommended that individuals continue:

. . . blooming like the rose in Thomas Gray's poem "born to blush unseen and waste its sweetness on the desert air." Of course, it is really not as bad as that, or we would not all be here tonight at this fine banquet. And if there has been any noticeable blushing around here this evening, it might be due to the blooming of more than one rose — maybe as many as four roses!

One might challenge the level of this humor, but it must be agreed that it applies directly to the situation, and very likely to the personality of the speaker.

A third factor can be illustrated by the talents of George Gobel. Mr. Gobel may attempt to tell a funny story, but most likely we will laugh at his strenuous efforts to *complete* the telling, rather than at the story itself. When attempting to describe a Gobel program a day or two after viewing, you probably find yourself saying, "Oh, I can't remember just what he said, but it certainly was funny!" Humor which comes from a personality or situation frequently is difficult to recall.

Funny stories, however, can be, and too often *are*, easily remembered.

Several years ago I happened to serve as a delegate to a college president's inauguration. Speakers, of course, were the order of the day and ranged from the governor of the state to the new president himself. Most of the speeches were the usual type of commendatory address. A chancellor of one of the largest eastern universities, however, varied the pattern with a pleasantly humorous analysis of the situation and personality of the incoming president.

The speech was greeted by thunderous applause from the audience and proved to be the chief topic of conversation for the remainder of the day. Delegates and audience alike were unanimous in approving this change of tone. Driving home that evening I heard the day's activities rebroadcast by my car radio, and again I marveled at the simple effectiveness of the address. Now after several years, I cannot recall a specific remark, but the quality of humor presented in that speech remains the most memorable event in an excellent day's program. A normally serious idea, when treated humorously, can often secure excellent results.

A somewhat similar situation occurred in one of my speech classes a few years ago. The assignment demanded a speech employing an audio or visual aid. One speaker met this requirement in excellent fashion by utilizing not only actual equipment for demonstration, but a flannel board as well. (The latter device is common to primary education and military training and consists of a board covered with flannel, upon which pictures and small objects — also backed with flannel — can be mounted temporarily.)

But it was the student's speech topic which really brought humor into play. His title, "How to Mix Cocktails," was more-than-usually intriguing since the college administration and the student body were currently in the midst of one of those perennial hassles involving liquor regulations for the campus. The speech was applied to the specific individuals in the audience when pictures of cocktails particularly suited for various class members were placed upon the flannel board. Thus, a demonstration speech, which is normally likely

to be somewhat-less-than-interesting, was made lively and highly acceptable through a consideration of originality and humor.

What I have been advocating is internal, rather than external, humor. When preparing a speech on fishing, don't immediately turn to a reference jokebook and peruse the listings under "Fishermen." Instead, consider yourself, your topic, and your information, and see if some humorous ideas do not evolve logically and naturally.

It may prove difficult, but it is far from impossible. One of the best methods of doing this is by attempting to secure a more jovial outlook toward life. A lot of funny things happen to all of us. Note them, enjoy them, and remember them. Carrying out this plan might aid a great deal more than just your public speaking, too.

Many individuals have proved successful chiefly because of their gift for appreciating the humor present in everyday life. Mark Twain, Will Rogers, Ring Lardner, Robert Benchley, Stephen Leacock, Chic Young, and James Thurber are noteworthy examples. Try reading some of the work of these men and it may aid you in cultivating an understanding of humor.

But do not let a preoccupation with internal humor, adaptation, originality, character, and situation obscure the most important facet of speaking. Above all, have something to say; but try now and then, to say it humorously.

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"CONFESS!"

By Edward H. Klevans

A dramatic analysis of Communist brainwashing techniques by a graduate student of engineering, of The University of Michigan.

ALMOST EVERYONE HAS, at some time or another, become so irritated and nervous from watching a movie that he couldn't wait until it was over. Many of you, no doubt, have walked out in the middle of such a show because you simply couldn't take any more. Or maybe the television commercials grated on your mind one night, and the same "fed-up" feeling so completely possessed you that you finally turned off the set.

Suppose, however, that you couldn't leave the theater, or the TV set had to stay on, and you were forced to sit there and be subjected to the misery. Even worse, let us put you in different surroundings, say a Korean prisoner of war camp, and the diet isn't TV commercials anymore, but hours of interrogation and speeches about communism. Now the treatment has a name. They call it *brainwashing*. Unlike the movies and television, whose primary goal is to entertain, interest or inform you, brainwashing strives toward getting you "fed-up" — so much so, in fact, that you finally break under the pressure.

But can it really be done? Can the strong truly be made to falter, and the weak to break? Can you actually force the intelligent to lose control of their minds and confess? Could it really be that anyone could be made to confess anything which had been poured into his head? The answer to all of these, unfortunately, is yes.

You say you don't believe it! Then ask Cardinal Joseph Mindzenty why he calmly admitted to spying, blackmarketing and a host of other grave sins he had never committed. Ask William Otis, an American newspaperman, and William Vogeler, an American businessman, why they falsely announced to the world they were guilty of plotting and spying. Ask the fifty Korean fighting men who confessed to charges of germ warfare if the mind can't be broken.

Dr. Robert H. Felix, director of the U. S. Health Institute, showed how simple it is to break a man's mind with his "dead man's float". He placed a blacked-out diving mask over the head of one of his assistants, Dr. Lilly, who then dived into a tank of water of body temperature. Only six hours later, Dr. Lilly was taken from the water, his mind on the verge of breaking. Several days later he was able to explain what it was like.

"My thoughts were beginning to go around and around the same subject, as if in a kind of closed circuit. You get on some subject and keep going over and over it. With all sensations shut out, you're left with this closed circuit. It magnifies, distorts and changes your entire thinking. First you get anxious, then very anxious. Next you have hallucinations, and finally you wind up mentally on the rocks."

At Magill University, a similar experiment was carried out by Dr. Woodburn Heron. He offered an easy \$20 a day for merely lying in bed.

His first taker was a truck driver who thought it was a joke. He was taken to a room with nothing but a bed. Thick gloves were put on his hands and over them cardboard gauntlets were placed to prevent his fingers from touching anything. Next, softly padded goggles were placed over his eyes. Air conditioning and sound proofing were added to assure absolute comfort. It would be the easiest money he had ever made.

In just a few minutes he was sound asleep. A little over an hour later, however, he awoke. Suddenly he missed something! It was the normal, everyday sounds we're so accustomed to hearing — the slam of a car door, tires skidding on the pavement, a child calling to his mother — nothing but deadly silence.

He couldn't let himself become panicky, so he started to sing. Even this seemed strange, for he only received the muted echo of the deadened sound. Finally, his voice gave out and panic once again began to set in. This time he tried whistling to break the fear.

How he itched to touch the mattress, but the gauntlets had robbed him of his sense of touch. How he longed to look around the room, but no matter how hard he strained, not even a foggy silhouette was visible.

Gradually he lapsed into hallucinations. Flashes of light appeared! Dots! Lines! And then the vivid nightmares. Little yellow men with black caps marching toward him.

Finally, after eleven and a half hours, he ran from the room screaming that he had been hit in the arm by bullets from a space rocket.

Out of a total of seventy people who passed through this comfortable horror chamber, only two lasted sev-

eral days and enjoyed every minute of it. Were they the strong, silent type? No, indeed, they were two lunatics carefully picked for the job.

What do these experiments show? They point out how science can effectively and accurately be used to perfect the techniques of brainwashing.

Brainwash. . . . What a perfect word! First, you scientifically flush everything from a man's mind. Strip him of his sense of fair play, of his loyalty to his country, of his memory of his beloved and of his ability to think straight. Once you have drained the contents from the brain, you feed in the information you want parroted and believed.

One of the classic examples of brainwashing is that of Lev Kamenov, a top Russian leader who fell prey to Stalin's ax in the purges of the late thirties.

The secret police unexpectedly appeared at Kamenov's villa late one night and hauled him off to prison. His cell, with a brilliant light continuously shining overhead, was a narrow box, hardly large enough to permit him to move. Once a day he was brought food by a disinterested, silent guard. The only sounds he heard were the horrible screams of tortured prisoners. He racked his brain to find the reason behind it all. Why had he been left alone to the boredom and loneliness? But everything would work out in the end. Or would it?

The insufficient food left him with continual hunger pangs. The lack of cleansing facilities resulted in a sloppy, dirty condition, and, even worse, he didn't care. It was the first sign that his mind was beginning to deteriorate.

To add to the misery, the temperature kept changing. For a few days it would be too hot, causing him to perspire. Then it would be too cold, making him shiver.

One night one of his seeming hallucinations was a reality. The secret police had unlocked the door and he heard them say, "Come along, Comrade Kamenov." What a relief! At last he would have someone to talk to, someone to break the weeks of solitude and monotony.

He was taken to the interrogator, a businesslike, middle-aged man, who got to his work quickly. "You are charged with being a mad-dog traitor," he said. "Are you ready to confess?"

"Confess to what?" Kamenov asked, "I have done nothing."

"Have you always been in full agreement with the regime?" the interrogator once more queried.

"I was the regime," Kamenov replied. "Of course, I had my own opinions —"

"Aha! So you admit to being a dissenter, an enemy of the regime! A traitor! Who were your accomplices? Confess!"

And this is the word he heard constantly for the next months. Confess! Confess! You are an instrument of the capitalist dogs. Confess! For days the questioning went on around the clock, with one interrogator being harsh and pressing, and the next, maybe, being chummy and friendly.

But they all pursued the same end. And if Kamenov was a bit too obstinate, a few more weeks of solitary confinement worked wonders.

The easiest way to relieve the pressure was to answer the way they wanted. They weren't really lies, just pressure reducers. He was becoming like Pavlov's dogs that drooled when the bell rang.

The breaking point was getting close. Now he was made to stand continually while being questioned. This doesn't sound like torture, but its effects are devastating. After twenty-four hours of standing, the legs become puffed, the ankles become swollen to twice their normal size, the taut skin becomes so tender that the slightest touch causes excruciating pain. The kidneys stop functioning, the excess fluid hampers blood circulation, and the heart works laboriously. The prisoner finally lapses into a delirious state. For Kamenov, the doctors were always standing nearby. This valuable piece of merchandise wasn't meant to die without a trial.

Lack of food; fraud; fear; fatigue; and endless, almost hypnotic, repetitions wove a spell around him, causing him to topple under the load of imaginary guilt. The desire to collapse had become irresistible. As it usually does, the surrender came suddenly.

He was now fed well, allowed to mix with other prisoners and take exercise. This was the fattening for the slaughter.

At the trial, which followed quickly, he looked well-fed. He spoke with calmness of his crimes and of the justice of the state. When the death sentence was passed, he praised his captors for their wisdom and firmness. No, this wasn't the end of one of our Korean soldiers. It was the end of a man who was trapped in the web of the system which he himself had expounded — brainwashing!

Sometimes the brainwashing can be so successful that even the memory of physical pain can be wiped out. Such was the case of Malcolm Bersohn, a brilliant expert in psychiatric medicine. In 1950 he was dragged from the hospital in China where he was working, crying out, "I don't understand. I haven't done anything." Malcolm soon realized what they were trying to do and fought it violently. But he was in the hands of the top Chinese Brain Laundry men. The combination of horrible physical torture and continued mental stress and strain finally succeeded. When he was released to come back to the United States, he was a devout Communist.

The tragedy of Bersohn's case was emphasized by

his vehement denial of any torture, even when confronted by a fellow prisoner who had seen him prostrate on the concrete floor, his arms and legs chained, ranting deliriously.

As Senator Edward J. Thye asked, "Where is the justice in court-martialing a young man who broke under brainwashing?"

Yet, by our present Code of Conduct, we ask our soldiers to do the impossible. We might as well ask them to stand at attention under ether.

What, then, is the answer? It is not new or difficult. Proclaim to the world that our servicemen will confess to anything and everything — but that not one single word of it is to be taken as truth. Tell the people that the United States realistically knows that the mind can be washed of the truth and false confessions can be substituted. Announce to all countries that America realizes that science has made tradition obsolete and that confessions should be greeted with a laugh.

We all pray that the day will never come when our family or we ourselves will face a Communist interrogator. But if it does come, we want to know that if we have reached the breaking point, if we have lost the ability to distinguish truth from untruth, if the agony of mental torture has had its deadly effect, that we will not be branded as traitors. We want to know that our government and our people will stand behind us and help us when the interrogator shouts, "Confess!"

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One Man's Opinion

FOR THREE MONTHS (June-August) your Editor has travelled around Australia, serving as a Consultant on Speech Education to the Commonwealth and State Offices of Education. It was an enlightening experience!

The people who most value democracy are those who have been deprived of it. Similarly, to appreciate what Speech means in a school system, just try looking carefully into a system that doesn't have it!

Speech education is of indispensable value primarily because it is education of the student. Call it personality development, if you will. Personality enlargement may be a better term. Whatever it is called, what we try to accomplish with our students is the living heart and soul of liberal, humane education!

When teachers are allowed to enter the classroom without having had their own speaking abilities enlarged and improved — the result is a deadening of the whole teaching process.

When students in classes, from the earliest primary grades through the university, are not required and guided in speaking up frequently and systematically to express their own ideas, the result is to make a mockery of the learning process.

Education must never be conceived as a pouring of facts into the heads of students, who in due time drain back samples of what they have learned onto written examination papers! This is automation at its worst, with human beings serving as the machines.

Any society maintains educational institutions in an endeavor to help develop the kinds of citizens that society values. We desire citizens who are alert, independent-minded, capable of thinking clearly, individual, cooperative, and responsible. Such qualities as these can be developed best in schools which are student-centered, in which the students are encouraged and even required to demonstrate what they know, believe, and feel in frequent discussion sessions.

* * * * *

In a recent Sunday issue of the *New York Times Book Review* section appeared a paragraph quoted from Jonathan Swift's 1706 essay, "Thoughts on Various Subjects." Here is what he said:

"The common fluency of speech in many men, and most women, is owing to a scarcity of matter, and a scarcity of words; for whoever is a master of language, and has a mind full of ideas, will be apt, in speaking, to hesitate upon the choice of both; whereas common speakers have only one set of ideas and one set of words to clothe them in; and these are always ready at the mouth: so people come faster out of a church when it is almost empty, than when a crowd is at the door."

By a happy coincidence your editor has at hand an article lately written by himself, which appeared in the April, 1957, issue of *Better Farming Methods*. The

parts which seem to answer Dean Swift read as follows:

It is an old idea that people who don't say much are probably profound. The idea is as false as it is familiar. On the contrary, it is usually true that the man who doesn't say much doesn't have much to say. Dull brains make for dull tongues.

Ideas, like tools, get dull and rusty from lack of use. They need to be brought forth out of the secret places in our minds and to be given precise form and definition in words. A thought that is not expressed is shapeless and shadowy. Putting it into precise language clarifies and defines it — and reveals both its weakness and its strength.

Nevertheless, the popular notion that still water runs deep can't be all wrong. Unless it were at least partly true, it couldn't possibly be so widely believed. And it is akin to another popular idea that is also partly true and partly wrong — namely, that listening is the most valuable of the communicative arts.

We have all learned from experience that people who speak seldom, or slowly, or with a long pause before they answer a question are likely to be heard with heightened respect. They often are given credit for a wisdom more profound than can be discovered in the bare text of their remarks.

Why should this be so?

One reason surely is that we are all tired of prattlers — of idle tongues that clackety-clack on and on, running with an all-but perpetual motion, while the minds that should be controlling them are off wool-gathering on a vacation.

Another reason is that habitual quickness of speech in the give-and-take of conversation is often the result of shallow thinking. The mind that doesn't take time to think may give off more sparks than genuine light.

Still another reason for the high regard given to slow and infrequent speakers is that those who always speak up quickly often pitch their remarks on a razor edge of sharp emotionalism. Feelings, attitudes, and prejudices always, for all of us, lie close to the surface, ready to be fired off by any conversational spark. But once expressed, they fizzle out, leaving behind them no more substance than the dying swish of an expired Fourth of July cartwheel.

The one who speaks seldom may, we trust, be thinking — even when there is no solid evidence to bolster up such faith.

The one who speaks slowly, clearing his throat as a signal, and uttering an admonitory "Hm-mm-mm!" some dozen seconds or so before his words begin to emerge with stately reticence, is at least giving his mind time to exercise a thoughtful control. Someone has defined education as learning how to delay deci-

(Continued on Page 33)

HOW TO THINK CREATIVELY

By Harold J. O'Brien

Dr. O'Brien (Ph.D., Penn State) passes on to us some of the stimulating suggestions he gives to groups of men from the unions and industrial management groups he frequently addresses.

IF YOU WERE ASKED to advance five improvements for the American kitchen *which have never been thought of before*, what would you suggest?

If you were asked to offer a series of *new* ways for distributing electrical power, other than the usual poles and lines, what would they be?

If you were asked to suggest five *new* ideas in human relations, (let's say five *new graceful* ways to respond to a compliment, or five *new* ways of conciliating an irate person), what pathway would your thoughts take?

You get the idea, of course. These situations have one thing in common. In each you would be asked to go beyond the frontiers of present thought and to come up with something new, something different from present thinking and present method. It leads us to an examination of four propositions:

1. In going beyond the present frontiers of thought, we are in the realm of creative thinking, which is the pursuit of the unknown, and sometimes the unknowable.
2. Our everyday problems are fertile fields for creative thinking.
3. Present custom and tradition tend to defeat creative activity.
4. We can do something about fostering creative activity.

Let's examine proposition number one. Organized research of a fundamental, creative nature in this country began in 1902 at DuPont's first formal research laboratory. Fundamental thought, as differentiated from applied study, seeks to establish new scientific facts without regard for immediate commercial use.

Our *proposition number one*, then, calls for stabs in the dark, for wild ideas, for a jet-propelled attitude towards ideation, and for imaginative new approaches.

Without this kind of approach would Stine of DuPont have discovered nylon? He wanted to know what would happen if molecules were arranged in lines instead of bunches. The result was nylon.

Without a creative approach would Kettering of General Motors have discovered ethyl? He thought he might get a gasoline of unusual mileage. He didn't exactly get it but he did arrive at an anti-knock fuel, ethyl.

The list could be extended: tubeless tires created by Goodrich with an imaginative approach; Brown-n-Serve rolls handed to General Mills by an alert and creative salesman.

What have we to learn from this proposition? It is clear that in pursuit of the new idea we must be able to shoot wild, to make tentative stabs, and to search out pet ideas. We must feel free to search even for that which might be unknowable because along the line of such free and imaginative exploration lie priceless knowable facts.

This brings us to proposition number two: our everyday problems are fertile fields for creative activity.

I can see you at your desk. You are in the position of needing to decide:

What *new* things can I say about my company's services?

What *new* ways are there for me to motivate my staff to fresh achievements?

What *new* product or what new service can my company market?

What *new* methods of building good customer or good community relations might we use?

What *new* ways are there to foster good employee relations on my staff?

What *new* things can I do to enrich the life experiences of my family?

These are indeed fertile fields. The need for new approaches is big. And it has been said that big needs call for big ideas. Why the big need has not been sparking big ideas launches us into proposition number three: present custom and tradition tends to defeat creativity.

First, let us look at company organization. Whether we admit it or not, it is a hierarchy. We do speak of "top management". We do use the term "top brass".

If there is a top there is just as surely a bottom, with many places between. The typical fellow who gazes to the top, regardless of the distance, is seeking approval. He is seeking status. He wants to be well thought of. Is it logical for one in such a position to shoot wild with ideas, to make tentative stabs? No indeed. He tends to remain quiet, and to tend to his own knitting. This keeps him from losing status at least. He learns to flatter his superiors by telling them what he feels they want to hear. He learns how not to upset staff tranquility by advancing any supersonic thought. He feels that protecting his tight little spot in the hierarchy is a lot better and safer than being a jet-propelled thinker.

Furthermore, good managers like to see where they are going and what they are going to get for the money

invested in a program. But a creative goal is not in full view at the outset. It is not often in the conscious scene. It can be wholly seen only when the creation is complete. If the "good manager" fails to understand this, the creative approach is squelched.

Let us look at the typical meeting or conference. Is this a situation where one might display a creative streak? No indeed. Traditionally the conference is critical. Traditionally it is evaluative. We evaluate and offer rejoinder and rebuttal to each other's offerings. We have been trained to behave this way in conferences because it stimulates discussion and it gets all the points of view before the group. Disagreement, we have been taught, is one way to refine an idea. This might be true, but it is poison to creative activity. It kills the imaginative approach. It makes people chary, wary, careful, or defensive. The delay and waste imposed by such tradition has lamed creative progress to an extent beyond which you and I are able to dream.

Besides these two broad areas where tradition militates against creativity, suppose we ask ourselves a series of test questions:

What becomes of employee hunches in my organization? Are they encouraged? Or are they shunned?

Are my folks because of the kind of leadership they work with timid of shooting wild in advancing ideas?

Am I a creative coach, a creative pace setter?

Are we bogged down by so much detail that creativity is smothered?

Are we so occupied as trouble-shooters and firemen that there is no time for us to be creators?

Am I a formalist? Do I demand conformance, and do I realize that conformance and creativity are not compatible?

These traditional barriers to creativity exist, since human beings are only human, even in organizations which are called democratic.

Proposition number four states that we can do something about this problem. We can foster creative thinking in ourselves in our organization.

About ourselves, let us begin by dispelling the myth which popularly persists that creativity is a magic faculty possessed only by the geniuses, the poets, the painters, the musicians, the blessed, and the folks who work in the laboratories.

Being blessed has nothing to do with it. Formal education has little to do with it. Sex has almost nothing to do with it. Age has nothing to do with it. The application of a seven point formula for producing new ideas has *much* to do with it:

1. *Locate and define your problem.* Creativity won't start without a stimulus. That is how the mind works. Knowing what is wrong is the trigger. Finding out and focusing on your customer or community problem is the take-off point.
2. *Learn all you can about the problem.* Stockpile all the lore, all the background you can get. Take

even that which seems irrelevant. When the imagination begins turning over, *new* ideas are going to emerge and you can't tell at this point what might be useful. What looks like a dud at this point might turn out to be loaded later.

3. *Organize the lore.* Don't let the stockpile be a hodge-podge. Catalogue it. Have your data readily available.
4. *Isolate the nuggets.* Somewhere in the stockpile of lore lie the crucial points which are going to evolve into a new principle. As you dig these out, remember that one nugget is not enough. As you isolate them you should see how they fit together into a new form, a new dimension, a new relationship. Shoot wild for the sparkling new thought, or a set of new thoughts. And *write them down*.
5. *Let the ideas hatch.* This step in creativity is sometimes called the incubation period. It involves getting away from the problem and letting the subconscious in its own mystical way work over the thoughts. It is mystical because what does happen in this phase of creativity is not really known. It is a period during which, *if the mind is sufficiently steeped in the lore of the problem*, new ideas take precedence over the old order. It is a time when you would be well advised to rest, see a show, have a good time, mix with interesting people. It is a time when the thoughts which emerged in step four just simmer in the conscious and are relegated in most part to the subconscious.
6. *An idea is born.* It will probably come at a most unexpected time. You might be having a cocktail, as indeed it happened with a close friend. It comes frequently at an undisciplined moment. And there is a high degree of certainty that this *will* happen if you have plunged deeply enough into the problem as described in the first four steps, and if you have waited for the incubation period to end.
7. *Adapt your brain child to your work situation.* You might need to rework it some. You might need to sell it; and if you do, remember that it is your child and you love it more than anyone else. You might need to wait till the proper moment, the proper occasion, to present it.

In fostering creativity in our organizations, there are at least two things which can be done. The *first* is that of working at establishing the proper atmosphere for creative activity. To accomplish this one would need to:

1. Learn the effect your company organization has upon creativity.
2. Learn the effect of company policy on creativity and work toward a system of motivations and awards for ideas which are absolutely new.
3. Learn how employees feel about going jet-propelled with new ideas. Can they shoot wild? Can

they pursue the unknown freely? Are they too timid?

4. Become a creative coach, and a creative pace setter yourself.
5. Teach your staff the seven steps to creativity advanced earlier.

The *second* thing one can do is to sponsor training in creative thinking for the folks in your organization.

This can be done by studying some of the literature which is available and conducting the training yourself, by enlisting the aid of a consultant in the field, or by requesting the training specialist in your company to arrange for the sponsorship of such training.

The horizons are wide. It is fun, and it is profitable to give birth to *new* ideas. It might well be that nothing has been done the best way yet.

What Shall I Talk About . . . ?

By John K. Brillhart

For the speaker looking for topics, Mr. Brillhart, Instructor at Penn State, has some cogent advice.

“I JUST CAN’T SEEM TO THINK OF ANYTHING to talk about. What shall I talk about?” The querist was an executive in a large Naval Supply Depot. He had obviously been talking for years in a manner that had at times interested many different people. But now he was facing a “new” situation, a public speaking class.

His problem was not at all unique. Perhaps you also have asked, “What shall I talk about?” There can be no “easy” answer or formula for the solution of such a problem, but there are a few principles which may help. Some examples of highly effective speeches may indicate a few of these principles.

The speaker was a big, raw-boned, awkward lad. His articulation was not always clear, his diction needed improvement, and his movements were somewhat jerky. But the audience listened intently and after the class many students could be heard discussing the speech, agreeing that the firearms bill should be defeated, and congratulating the speaker.

Five years have elapsed since a high school girl attempted to stimulate her classmates and teacher to visit the “Pink Palace” in Memphis. Her detailed description gave the listeners a vivid image of the building. So effective was the speech that if this writer ever goes to Memphis he plans to see the “Pink Palace.”

Speeches about banking, gray-iron castings, a chimes system, cookies, dress styles, redwood trees, bridge construction, the Constitution—all of these disparate topics have held similar listeners “spellbound” with interest. On the other hand, many talks about apparently “interesting” topics have fallen flat. The listeners sat unmoved, possibly lost in reveries, planning the day ahead, reviewing course notes, worrying about problems at

home, not even attending, let alone comprehending. What made the difference? A “gift of gab?” Colorful language, a superb voice, a striking appearance? Hardly. Indeed, it would be folly to attempt to say “*This* made the difference.” However, a very significant correlation seems to exist between the subject of the speech, the speaker’s personal involvement with the topic, and the effectiveness of the speech. If you are in search of good speech topics, consider the following when answering your question, “What shall I talk about?”

INTERESTS

Choose a topic in which you are vitally interested. The prime requisite seems to be your own enthusiasm for the subject. Interest alone is not enough basis for the selection of a topic, but to speak on a subject which does not engross one’s attention seems to invite failure. The writer has heard many excellent speeches from persons who were not skilled or “gifted” speakers, but who were keenly interested in their topics.

A high school girl in Kentucky was much alarmed by the poor condition of the schools in her district. She decided to speak for an improved educational system. A vast amount of research, careful planning, and extensive practice (fourteen times!) produced a highly effective speech. If she had not been so interested in her subject she probably would never have prepared her speech so well.

Recently a student in one of the writer’s classes spoke about three styles of high jumping. He received excellent attention, sincere congratulations from other students, and his highest grade in the course. Part of the

secret was revealed when his name appeared in the newspaper for winning the high jump at a track meet.

A Philadelphia policeman told his fellow trainees how the individual officer was supported by the well organized and highly skilled staff. He appeared to be "all wrapped up" in his work. This speech was later chosen by both his fellow officers and the instructor as the best speech given in the class. Almost without exception, effective speeches are those on topics in which the speaker is vitally interested, subjects he chooses to talk about in conversations, he reads much about, and with which he has frequent personal contact.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The speakers mentioned above were not talking about abstract ideas separated from any sensory perceptions. Each speaker had many specific referents for his "subject" — cases — life experiences. He "knew" what he was talking about at a level much closer to reality than words ever get. In his essay on "The Study of Man" L. J. Henderson summarized and commented on Hippocrates' advice for physicians. What he said is applicable to the selection of a speech topic. Simply substitute the word "speaker" for "physician" in the following sentence:

The physician must have, first, intimate, habitual, intuitive familiarity with things; secondly, systematic knowledge of things; and thirdly, an effective way of thinking about things.

Experience shows that this is the way to success. It has long been followed in studying sickness, but hardly at all in studying the other experiences of daily life.

Only if the speaker has accurately evaluated his topic ("intuitive familiarity with things"), can he possibly be expected to communicate a reliable "understanding." And if the persuader has not accurately appraised a situation, woe betide that listener whose evaluations are influenced by the speech. The authors of *Communicative Speech* (Oliver, Dickey, and Zelko) emphasize the importance of a speech being "authoritative." One *earns* the *right* to speak only after he has gained this "intuitive familiarity with things," his subject.

In short, part of the answer to the initial question might be phrased thus: "About some events with which you have had some personal experiences."

SPECIFIC CASES

Probably all of us have gotten lost in clouds of words that on close examination refer to nothing. As Stuart Chase said, there is a "... great richness of evidence that people do not know what they are talking about." Often speeches about such topics as the "intangible values of a college education," "the blessings of being an American," or "the evils of communism" are sheer nonsense. Neither speaker nor listener knows what the words mean, for the speaker has no "meaning." In-

stead of vague concepts, talk about specific cases, experiences, something both speaker and listener can point to and say "*This* is what I mean." Then "the evils of communism" will be limited to talk about a specific government and some actions it has taken against certain people.

THE OBVIOUS

Cassius J. Keyser once said that when it comes to the matter of escaping our attention, "... the very obvious is often a rival of the obscure." Many students in this writer's classes (old and young alike) have overlooked the most obvious subjects for good speeches. What do you know the most about? What have you done? What is the *obvious* topic for you to talk about? Probably no one wants to listen to six speeches about hotels during one semester from a Hotel Administration student, but every alert human being has had many experiences that could provide *obvious* topics for speeches. The next time you are scheduled to speak on a subject of your own choosing, try these steps as a means of locating the obvious:

1. Make a list of the subjects that interest you (i. e., that you read about voluntarily, you have experience with, or often converse about), then rank them in order.
2. List the topics you are most familiar with, especially those you have first-hand experiences with and have personally evaluated from your observations.
3. From these lists select the topics that you most desire to share with other persons, that you feel others should also experience.
4. By all means consider the needs and past experiences of the listeners with the subject chosen. Limit the subject until it can be thoroughly discussed in the available time, being sure to include the descriptive data that interested you, the speaker.

Thus from the topic of baseball a student limited his speech to "The Role of the Second Baseman in a Doubleplay" — and produced an excellent speech. This technique will not provide "ready made" speeches, but it may help you to select rapidly the best topic for you.

CONCLUSION

Many factors should be taken into account in answering the question, "What shall I talk about?" The interests of the listeners, their level of experience, etc. The occasion, the amount of time, and the reasons why you were chosen to speak. But above all else, the speaker should talk about those topics in which he has a sincere and abiding interest, which he desires to share with others, with which he has had first-hand experience, with which he has intuitive familiarity (or can acquire it through study), for which he can point to specific cases, and which should then be very obviously "right" for him.

THE WIND OF CONTROVERSY

By Harold R. Hogstrom

In the form of a realistic dialogue, Mr. Hogstrom (doing graduate work in Speech at Syracuse University) ably argues some educational issues of genuine pertinence.

A Serious Comedy

PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE

Dean Able of Willow University, pleasant, plump and 50.

Professor Platteau, chairman of the Dept. of Philosophy, crusty, contentious and 65.

Professor Aristerman, chairman of The Dept. of Speech, serene, scholarly and 55.

Asst. Professor Ignotus, member of The School of Business Administration, vigorous, dogmatic, sophomore, and 35.

Assoc. Professor Kickerow, member of The Political Science Dept., tolerant, sophisticated, and 50.

SCENE

It is two o'clock on the afternoon of a fine spring day. As the curtain rises, Dean Able's secretary is arranging chairs around a large conference table and placing water glasses, pads, pencils, etc. at each of the six places. When she has finished her attempts at giving the place the atmosphere of a board of directors' meeting, she stands off to admire her own hand work. It is obvious that the result falls quite short of the intended effect, for what self-respecting concern would denigrate the hallowed precincts of its corporate thinking with such shoddy furnishings? There can be no doubt about it; this could only be the scene of a university faculty discussion. Perhaps the Dean's secretary recognizes this, too, for her shoulders droop. The light dies out of her eyes and she leaves the room, never to appear again. Presently the conferees file in, taking seats around the table.

* * * *

Dean Able: All right, gentlemen, I wonder if we can begin? As you know, I've called you all in here to help me make a rather important decision about the future of the department of speech at this university. Each of you has some particular interest in this subject. Professor Aristerman's is obvious, since he is head of the department. Perhaps we can begin by having each of you state his attitude toward the discipline of speech.

Prof. Platteau: Before expressing any attitude, Dean, I would be obliged to repudiate your use of the term "discipline" to describe what is taught by Prof. Aristerman and his colleagues.

Dean Able: No personalities, please, Dr. Platteau.

Platteau: I am not casting aspersions. I have the highest regard for Aristerman and his cohorts. Indeed, so far as he is concerned, I can think of no higher tribute than to say that he is simply in the wrong department. He belongs with me in philosophy. Except . . .

Aristerman: And you, John, belong with me in speech.

Platteau: Except for this fixation he has about speech, he is an entirely level-headed and noble fellow. I can only explain this aberration by attributing it to a pre-natal brain lesion.

Able: Harrumph! Shall we get on with our discussion?

Dr. Kickerow, you have been absent from this campus for some years serving with distinction in our national government. You should be able to bring a fresh approach to this problem.

Kickerow: You put it very kindly, Dean. The fact is that I was dumped out of office by my constituents. But it is certainly true that four years in the House gives one a new perspective on oratory.

Able: And what is the nature of that perspective?

Kickerow: In practical politics it is simply not enough to be well-informed. You've got to have the ability to debate effectively. I have seen dozens of splendid measures fail of passage simply because the committee chairman didn't know how to present his case in the best possible light when it came time for floor debate. Put me down in emphatic endorsement of speech.

Able: Thank you. And now let us hear from Professor Ignotus. Gentlemen, you've all met Peter Ignotus and you know that he came from a successful career in business to teach in our School of Business Administration. Some of our most important trustees are very interested in his unique approach to this question.

Ignotus: Well, Dean, Gentlemen, I feel honored to be here and to have this opportunity to present to you some of the results of the most advanced thinking going on today in the commercial world on the subject of speech or, as we prefer to call it, communication. Studies have shown that men with training in communication make the most successful administrators. And why not? It is to be expected. In this world you've got to sell yourself and your product whatever it may be, and we do that largely through speech and its related functions. Take a poll of the students on this campus and you would find that the professors who are the best speakers are more than likely to be the ones who have done the best job at selling themselves to the student body.

Platteau: I protest against the language employed by this young man. I know not what others may say about their subjects but philosophy is not for sale on this campus. Nor are the philosophers!

Ignotus: A figure of speech, sir. Of course I did not mean to use the word "sell" in its usual sense.

Platteau: I know exactly what you meant. The thought is father to the word. In the name of holy learning I beg you to keep the language of usury off this campus.

Dean Able: Now, now John. If you go on in this manner we'll never come to any decision. Mr. Ignotus, when you know Professor Platteau a little better, you will come to realize that he is a thorough-going humanitarian in spite of all his efforts to appear to be an intolerant ogre. (Shouts of "Libel!" from Platteau) And now, Professor Quin, may we have your opinion.

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ADDRESS: Chairman, Department
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Quin: I owe it to you all to preface my remarks by pointing out that I am a progressive educator. (Strangled sputterings from Platteau.) Having made that awful admission and having burdened myself with the onus of the name, I feel that you now owe me an attentive hearing.

A favorite cliché of persons who share my persuasion is that they are teachers of children. I disagree with the sentiment behind this cliché. A good progressive must first and foremost have a firm grasp of subject matter. The most important aspect of that subject matter is language. A good teacher can be lacking in almost any other skill but he cannot be a good teacher unless he is a good speaker. However, lest Dr. Aristerman take this as an unconditional endorsement of what *he* teaches, let me quickly disabuse him. I must be convinced before I will believe that it is possible for him to teach speech as he does in the isolation of his corner of the campus. But of this I will have more to say, later.

Able: Thank you, sir. We will be looking forward to your exposition. And now, Dr. Platteau, I don't suppose you'll need any urging to disburden yourself of your attitude.

Platteau: None what-so-ever. I'm not sure I follow Quin's particular brand of casuistry, but the rest of them stand condemned by their words as a collection of charlatans.

Able: However, would you be kind enough to state your case?

Platteau: I use the Socratic method. My case will develop itself.

Able: I will not permit badgering, John.

Platteau: Can you say this to a "thorough-going humanitarian," Dean? I am deeply wounded.

Able: Hmm. This would probably be a good time to fill in the background for this discussion. As you all know the building committee is faced with the problem of space on this campus. At present the speech department is housed in Whately Hall.

Aristerman: Excuse me, sir, but that edifice is more usually alluded to as Whately Cottage.

Able: Yes, quite so. At any rate the structure must be demolished. It is beyond further repair and occupies the site of the new wing of the School of Business Administration. The question therefore arises of what to do with the department of speech. It is no secret to you, Aristerman, that the School of Business Administration is quite willing and anxious for you to be absorbed into their new premises, and into their school as well. Another proposal is that the activities and faculty of the speech department be blended into the curriculum of the entire liberal arts program and that speech should cease to exist as a separate entity. And yet another proposition is that we undertake a drive for funds to be used to erect a new building for the speech department. Properly to evaluate these various solutions to the problem, we must have the

benefit at your most serious and concerted thought on the whole subject. Now, Mr. Ignotus, perhaps you would agree to present the position of your department in the matter.

Ignotus: We in business administration look upon the absorption of speech into our area as a very natural development with great mutual advantage. The speech people would have all the space and equipment they need to do the kind of a job that needs to be done and we would have the means to give our students the kind of training in communication they need to be successful in business.

Platteau: And tell me Mr. Ignotus, why does that matter?

Ignotus: I know what you are getting at, Dr. Platteau.

You see I had several courses in philosophy during my undergraduate days. So when you start going back to "first causes" you'll find that I can give you the answers. You, sir, are an ivory-towered intellectual living in a world of "ought to be's"; but outside there is another world of the "here and now." We are preparing our students to cope with this world exactly as they will find it. You are preparing yours to be dissatisfied with what they will find. But let's face it, business runs our society, business profits pay your salary and mine, business keeps the country prosperous and the practical business men you doubtless deplore have made our American standard of living possible. Now, what's wrong with educating young people in such a way that they fit into this pattern of success? Talking well is a part of that pattern.

Platteau: To what purpose is all of this talking directed?

Ignotus: Well, when you come right down to it, it's what I said before, to sell yourself and your product.

Platteau: But suppose you and your product are without value? Suppose you are a liar and suppose your product breaks down the third time it is used?

Ignotus: Of course a business man must believe in his product and any product which is able to stand the test of free competition has to be good. So there is no reason for him to be a liar. If he is, he'll go out of business, but we are only interested in turning out successful businessmen.

Platteau: But how is he to know that his product is good?

Ignotus: Simple. If it is useful or gives pleasure to the buyer, it's good.

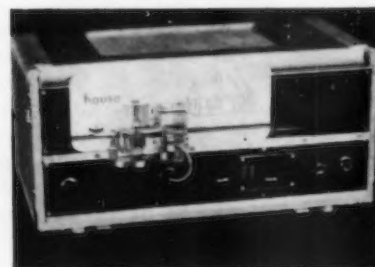
Platteau: But narcotics give pleasure. Are they also good? Television is making a whole generation of Americans spectator sportsmen. They are physical weaklings as a result and medicine assures us that they are laying a firm foundation for premature old age.

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Ignotus: Nothing is without some draw-backs and anyway if people didn't want these things they wouldn't buy them.

Platteau: But aren't you hoping that your students will become "super-salesmen" as a result of the training they'll get in speech?

Ignotus: Well, of course.

Platteau: Doesn't this mean that they will become able to determine what their customers will buy?

Ignotus: Yes —

Platteau: Won't your successful young businessmen be deciding what the public wants, in that case?

Ignotus: Well, I suppose so.

Platteau: It seems to me that you are putting a very potent weapon into their hands. Isn't it possible that they might use this weapon for nefarious purposes? And how are they to know the difference between the just and the unjust, the valid and the false, between good and evil, if they are trained to believe that what works is good?

Ignotus: This is too theoretical. Let's get down to cases.

Platteau: A point well taken. What are the means of persuasion which your students will be taught to make them better able to sell themselves and their product as you put it?

Ignotus: I'm glad you asked that question. Well, a great many things have been learned about social control in recent times. Communication used to be a pretty hit-or-miss proposition, but now we have the public opinion poll, depth interviewing, reaction tests, sales analysis, motivational research, and other similar tools to tell us when we are hitting the mark. Although we know a great deal about what makes people tick, we'd like the speech people to do lots of experimenting to determine exactly what kinds of appeals to use under different circumstances. For instance, we'd like to have an auditorium fitted up with seats containing instruments that would measure audience restlessness, blood pressure, rate of breathing, skin conductivity, etc., so that we could have accurate studies made of reactions to different types of stimuli. The speech professor would find this information useful in evaluating the performance of his students. If they complained about their grades he could simply show them printed results of the electronically recorded data.

Aristerman: I can visualize all of this leading to technological unemployment among speech teachers, Mr. Ignotus.

Ignotus: Nonsense, sir. Why the machine would be freeing you from the tedious tasks of evaluation so that you could devote your energies to more important functions. That's what progress is for. To free the human imagination from mundane details so that it can soar to the heights.

Platteau: Mr. Ignotus, it seems pointless to pursue this discussion of ends with you since we seem to be

operating in entirely different contexts. Suppose we confine ourselves to discussing means. How do you propose to decide what means of persuasion to use in selling soap?

Ignotus: The answer to that is so patently obvious that I'm surprised you ask the question. If it works, it is the means to use.

Platteau: So, we are back to pragmatism. Young man, cannot you understand that it is possible to persuade people by completely immoral methods?

Ignotus: Such as?

Platteau: You get some non-smoking opera star to testify that a certain brand of cigarette improves his singing.

Ignotus: But that sort of thing is common practice and there is no law against it.

Platteau: Is it honest?

Ignotus: Honest?

Platteau: Yes, where in your course of study do you teach your students morality in choosing among the various means of persuasion?

Ignotus: I don't understand.

Platteau: Evidently not. Aristerman, you have been sitting there listening to this man's proposition without uttering a single syllable of disgust. Do I infer from this that you are giving his plan some consideration? That you would deliver up your department into the hands of these electronic poll-takers?

Aristerman: I should sooner die. For a more detailed answer I refer you to the first book of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

Able: Is that your final word on the matter?

Aristerman: It is my final and irrevocable answer.

Able: Well, we seem to have gotten somewhere.

Ignotus: But Dr. Aristerman, why? It seemed to us to be a very generous and tempting offer. If you won't come in with us, we'll have to do the job ourselves, but we wanted you people to do it because you are the specialists.

Aristerman: Your offer is most magnanimous, but I do not wish to be associated in any way with what you intend to do.

Platteau: Bravo!

Aristerman: Rhetoric is an art, not a collection of sure-fire formulae guaranteed to bring results where aspirin has failed.

Platteau: An art, you say?

Aristerman: Yes, an art. The art of finding arguments.

Platteau: Pardon me, but you are wrong. It is a mere knack of flattering audiences to the advantage of the speaker.

Kickerow: Platteau, you are unfair. Rhetoric is more—much more than that.

Platteau: Is it? Tell me then, is it not true that rhetoric teaches the student how to satisfy an audience? To

discover what proportion of ingredients are needed to achieve conviction?

Kickerow: That is true enough.

Platteau: Is it not also true that a chef must learn these things, with the difference that while he mixes herbs and spices the orator mixes words? Would you be justified in calling the cook's skill an art? If not, what right have you to call rhetoric an art?

Kickerow: But don't you see? You have yourself struck upon one essential difference between the two. Words and spices. The materials of the cook are concrete; the materials of the rhetorician are abstract. The cook merely repeats tested recipes. The rhetorician can never exactly repeat an effort at persuasion because he is dealing with an infinitely variable factor; namely, his human audience.

Platteau: But our friend Ignotus tells us that this variable is being eliminated by graphs and vacuum tubes.

Kickerow: He is laboring under a delusion.

Platteau: Very well then, if what you say is correct, then what is left for the rhetorician to teach? If his methods of persuasion cannot be relied upon to produce conviction, it seems to me that the entire course of study stands condemned.

Kickerow: Not at all. You are forgetting that though an artist is not limited by his techniques, neither can he afford to ignore them. The rhetorician must be thoroughly grounded in the techniques of persuasion.

Platteau: You have yet to demonstrate that your rhetorician has the attributes of an artist.

Kickerow: He may not *be* an artist. But assuming that he is, he will have one characteristic or quality that all true artists possess in common.

Platteau: And what is that?

Kickerow: An instinctive sense of what is suitable; taste, if you will. Without this he cannot know what devices to use or the correct proportions of them, nor which arguments to choose and how to phrase them.

Platteau: Perhaps he may be an artist but what assurance can you give me that he will not also be a scoundrel, for I have heard nothing which leads me to believe that your rhetorician or his teacher is much concerned with truth.

Aristerman: It is my turn to use the socratic method on you, John, and in so doing I shall demonstrate one of the unique qualities of rhetoric; that is, its convertibility. Its methods can be used equally well to prove or disprove, just like the methods of dialectic.

Platteau: Then you admit that rhetoric is not concerned with truth but only with gaining conviction?

Aristerman: Of course, that is quite so; but, having said that, I still do not agree that rhetoric stands condemned. Do you not concede that between two evenly matched opponents in debate the natural advantage is with the one who is on the side of truth?

Platteau: Yes, I do agree.

Aristerman: Are we not attempting to produce honorable men at this university?

Platteau: I would agree that this is the objective of some departments on campus.

Aristerman: Assuming that we achieve some modest degree of success in producing honorable men and that our honorable men will generally be on the side of virtue and justice, do we not owe it to them to insure that they will be able to compete on an equal footing with less honorable men when pitted against them in debate?

Platteau: Of course, but by teaching them the methods of rhetoric you are giving them training in dishonesty.

Aristerman: An argument is only honest or dishonest in a context and rhetoric is taught out of context.

Platteau: Its methods lend themselves as readily to evil purposes as to good ones.

Aristerman: A sharpened blade may be used to slash a throat or remove a cancer. The fact that it can perform either operation does not make it an evil object. And let us say a word about truth. You have juggled that word around with great familiarity. Are you of the persuasion which regards truth as revealed?

Platteau: I am a Platonist. You should know better than to ask that question.

Aristerman: Since you recognize the difficulty of attempting to define truth in the abstract, then how can we hope to pin it down in the hurly-burly of public life unless we have the means of finding it. That means is provided by rhetorical debate.

Platteau: It is also provided by dialectical debate. You must agree that dialectic is vastly superior to rhetoric if you are out to find out where the truth of the matter lies or who is lying about the truth of the matter.

Aristerman: But dialectic does not lend itself to public deliberation. As Kickerow pointed out, there are too many variables. And in using dialectic you are eliminating the emotional factor.

Platteau: And a fine thing too. What better recommendation can we offer in its favor than that it should remove the one element which is most likely to cloud men's thoughts.

Aristerman: Nonsense. It is this very emotion which makes possible the accomplishment of half the world's work. Without it society would become petrified and human relationships would descend to the level of chemical reactions.

Platteau: Very well. Rhetoricians are artists and they show us the way to truth. Believe that if you like; but what do the students talk about if they learn the techniques of their art out of context?

Quin: And there you have hit upon the nub of the matter. I quite agree.

Platteau: You agree?

Quin: Most emphatically.

Platteau: Then in that case I must be wrong. I have had strange bed-fellows in my time but never until this moment have I been found occupying the same couch as a disciple of John Dewey.

Quin: But as a classicist you must realize how much Dewey owed to Quintilian.

Platteau: Indeed I do, but I had hoped you did not. However, it is truly written that no one can match the devil at quoting Holy Writ.

Able: Dr. Quin, with Platteau's kind indulgence I would be pleased to hear you pursue your line of thinking in this matter of learning out of context.

Quin: Certainly. I have already stated my belief in the importance of speech. But I also indicated that I disagreed with the manner in which it was taught at this university. Here it is taught as a discrete discipline without connection to any other discipline. But this is unrealistic in the extreme, for methods are without meaning unless they are applied. Professor Aristerman would be the first to agree that the truly fine orator is that man whose art is supported by the widest possible acquaintance with learnings in all fields. But the teaching of rhetoric cannot be separated from the subjects of rhetoric.

Aristerman: How do you propose to bring them together, Quin?

Quin: By requiring every member of the liberal arts faculty to be a teacher of rhetoric. And by requiring that everyone of their classes should provide abundant opportunity for the practice of rhetorical techniques.

Aristerman: You are quite sure that the arts faculty is capable of giving this kind of instruction?

Quin: Why not? Do they not use these very techniques in their own teaching?

Aristerman: The members of my department have been selected not simply because of their skill in teaching rhetoric but because they are, every one of them, men of wide and profound learning.

Quin: I know that, Professor Aristerman, and it is that fact which makes them so eminently well qualified to teach subject matter. My basic thesis is that it is a dangerous mistake to separate knowledge and the means of applying that knowledge. This is the path

to sterile scholarship. It is much worse; it is the path to amoral scholarship. It seems to me that our prime responsibility is to make sure that the university-bred have the ability to provide society with effective leadership. They can only be effective when they can communicate with other members of society. "Popular dialectic," as someone has called rhetoric, provides that means of communication.

Aristerman: I could not be in greater agreement with you, Quin. But why can't all this be accomplished under our present mode of operation? You seem to have a very limited concept of what we do in our courses in speech. Actually it is exactly what you think should be done in all other courses. We require the student to apply his learning. The subjects of his discourse are derived from his total university experience, and he is evaluated strictly on the basis of his ability to communicate his ideas. As for your proposal about deputizing the entire faculty as teachers of rhetoric — well, it would be marvelous, indeed, if very many of them took this responsibility very seriously and more marvelous still if very much rhetoric was actually taught.

But lest I sound too negativistic, I would like to offer this suggestion. At the present we require all of our students to take speech in their freshmen year. This seems to me to be the wrong time for it. Why not require them to take it in their senior year, at which time they can bring all their accumulated learning to bear on the subject? Wouldn't their rhetorical experiences be far richer and more rewarding at the end of their college careers than they can be now, coming at the beginning as they do? And this would provide a better answer to Professor Platteau's question about what the student will have to talk about than he has gotten so far.

Able: Well, gentlemen this discussion has been very fruitful and has given me much food for thought. I think I can recommend a course of action on this matter to the Board of Trustees and the President that will reflect your evident opinions.

Aristerman: Dean, this is rather important to me. Can you reveal the nature of that recommendation?

Able: Certainly; it will be for the university to replace Whately Cottage with a more adequate structure. Meeting's adjourned.

WORD OF MOUTH

By word of mouth first stories came.
There was no type nor pictured voice
To make of speech a parlor game.
But through man's choice

And science's skill
Men with a zeal to teach
Evolved a method where, through will,
The educated man takes speech.

— By LEAH SHERMAN

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OUR TONGUE-TIED DEMOCRACY

By A. Whitney Griswold

The President of Yale University, former Professor of History, spoke urgently of the value of conversational speech, in an address which he presented at Brown University, September 20, 1954.

CONVERSATION in this country has fallen upon evil days. The great creative art whereby man translates feeling into reason and shares with his fellow man those innermost thoughts and ideals of which civilization is made is beset by forces which threaten its demise.

It is forsaken by a technology that is so busy tending its time-saving devices that it has no time for anything else. It is drowned out in singing commercials by the world's most productive economy that has so little to say for itself it has to hum it. It is hushed and shushed in dimly lighted parlors by television audiences who used to read, argue, and even play bridge, an old-fashioned card game requiring speech. It is shouted down by devil's advocates, thrown into disorder by points of order. It is subdued by soft-voiced censors who, in the name of public relations, counsel discretion and the avoidance of controversy like so many family physicians breaking the news gently and advising their patients to cut down on their calories.

It starves for want of reading and reflection. It languishes in a society that spends so much time passively listening and being talked to that it has all but lost the will and the skill to speak for itself.

* * * * *

I wonder how many of us are aware of this predicament and interested in its possible consequences. It was conversation, reaching its orderly and exalted climax in the dialogues of Socrates, which, in an age without books or their latter-day substitutes, laid the foundation of the civilization we are dedicated to defend. It was conversation of which the New Testament, the greatest teaching ever recorded, was composed. It was conversation among small groups of university scholars still in a bookless world that revived learning at the end of the Dark Ages.

Conversation is the oldest form of instruction of the human race. It is still an indispensable one. Great books, scientific discoveries, works of art; great perceptions of truth and beauty in any form all require great conversation to complete their meaning: without it they are abracadabra — color to the blind or music to the deaf.

Conversation is the handmaid of learning, true religion, and free government.

* * * * *

By this path I return to this university and the extraordinary opportunity that is yours who are about to

enter it. Where else save Elysium itself is life so congenial to conversation as it is in a residential liberal arts college?

How, then, shall we make the most of it? Shall we have courses in conversation? Perish the thought. Let us have conversation in courses but no courses in conversation. By conversation in courses, moreover, I do not mean whispering at lectures. I mean as much give and take between teacher and student as is possible in this day of soaring enrollments, teacher shortages and financial deficits.

Let us not forget that there is a point in relation to these seemingly ineluctable limits beyond which teaching becomes mass-production and the law of diminishing returns sets in. At its best, teaching is a two-way process, an exchange of thought between teacher and student, by which both profit and the thought exchanged becomes ennobled in the transfer. I do not see how we can make very great compromises with this principle without dashing our hopes for conversation and for higher education as well.

* * * * *

The forms such conversation should take and the rules it should follow are of course important. Like all art, it cannot be formless and it must show obedience to certain classic principles. Jargon is not conversation. Plain English, the purer the better, is essential.

One of the things that made possible the attainments of Greek philosophy was the extraordinary fluidity of the Greek language, which the philosophers who are still read used in its purity and never in adulteration. Small talk and gossip are not conversation. Neither is indictment, with which I include any and all one-way processors of insinuation, invective, diatribe, denunciation, excoriation, anathema, and so on, notwithstanding their current popularity. Conversation is an exchange of thought that leaves all parties to it a grain the wiser. It implies progress. Though it may begin anywhere, even in the realm of trivia, it should try to get somewhere and carry every one with it as it goes.

The basic principles of conversation were established by Socrates both by example and by precept more than 2,000 years ago. One of the most important of these was that conversation should take place among friends, in a congenial atmosphere, with common interests at

heart. Best of all would be one common interest, namely, wisdom.

If Carlyle could define a university as a collection of books, Socrates might well have defined it as a conversation about wisdom.

* * * * *

Even with the help of Socrates we should have work to do before the art of conversation in our colleges came into its own. We should have to insure our students a proper subject of conversation. Fortunately we have this, too, ready to hand in our liberal arts curriculum. This is the educational birthright of undergraduates at Brown and Yale. Its currency has never been devalued: it is still at par with the currency of Socrates' one true coin. With its perceptions of greatness and excellence, it embodies the full meaning the Greeks gave to virtue and Socrates himself gave to wisdom.

As a source of great conversation it has never been equalled. I do not decry vocational training. In some form or other it is essential for most of us and has something to offer all of us. What I do decry is vocational training masquerading as liberal education and usurping its place. The demand of society for the immediate and the utilitarian is unrelenting. The Sophists answered it in Socrates' day. Suppose Socrates had followed suit. Education can always cash in on this demand, nor do I criticize the educational institutions that do. I just hope Yale and Brown won't.

* * * * *

Is this a pious hope, visionary and impractical in this practical world? I ask you what might have happened if we had started cashing in on the demand when it was first felt. Let us take the timely case of television. It is said to be revolutionizing American life and we are urged to introduce courses in it in our curriculum. There have been several such inventions that were thought by contemporaries to be revolutionary agents of change in American life. The first was the telegraph, whose inventor and his associates, as I recall it, were so awestruck by their handiwork that their first sig-

naled message was "What hath God wrought!" Next came the telephone, then movies, then radio, and finally TV.

Each one of these inventions, speedily put into mass production and consumption, was fraught with no less revolutionary consequences for our society and accompanied by no less apocalyptic prophecies than those which accompany television today.

Suppose, in view of this, Yale had added courses in the techniques and uses of each to its liberal arts curriculum. I can imagine an entering freshman with the Course of Study Catalogue in his hand. He finds courses in telegraphy, telephony, cinematography, radiotelegraphy and telephony and — words fail me to describe the science of television. Then come the influence courses, the influence of the telegraph on the telephone, the influence of the telephone on radio, the influence of radio on the movie, and so on. Then the influence of influence courses, e. g., the influence of radio and telephonic techniques on communication and its impact on the American family.

The freshman reads on in despair. He is looking for a course in English. He can't find one. He goes to the dean. "English?" says the dean. "Oh we don't bother with that any more. We have developed more effective means of communication."

* * * * *

The most important thing about any form of communication is what is communicated. The most important thing about what is communicated is its valuation in the currency of Socrates' coin. The utilitarian skills and techniques of each generation are soon outmoded. The search for wisdom and virtue never is. Not all the technological triumphs of history have satisfied man's need for these, nor displaced or even approached them as the most inspiring and fruitful of all subjects of human conversation.

We must manage to present this subject to our undergraduates in such a way as will inspire them to help revive conversation in this tongue-tied democracy that has such good ideas yet cannot speak its own mind.

Sponsors of Today's Speech

In the September issue were printed names of sixty individuals listed as "sponsors" of *TODAY'S SPEECH*. Each sponsor pays \$7.50 annually to SAES Executive-Secretary Paul Holtzman (see inside front cover). The extra funds help pay the promotion costs of building circulation. To the September list these names are added:

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Talkers All: Our Human Destiny

By Robert T. Oliver

A further development of the theme of the preceding article by President Griswold.

WE TALK BECAUSE it is our nature to do so. We cannot help it. Man is essentially the talking creature. Within our brains exists a power possessed by no other living organism: the power to pick up images of the outside world and to transmute them into symbols within our own nerve structures.

Such symbols are unimaginably numerous. Psychologists have decided that a tenth of a second is a measurable unit of perception, and that each of these units may contain as many as a thousand perceived items. These perceptions enter into the brain as symbols, where they combine to form what we think of as consciousness. The sheer number of separate symbols which are catalogued and defined, however fleetingly, is staggering. But even more wonderfully, they are combined, compared, analyzed, and formed into numerous and extremely diverse patterns.

Lower animals have to some extent this power to live a life in their brains that differs from the life around them, but not in the same sense as man. A mother hen, for example, can utter a warning squawk when a barking dog approaches, but she can't gather her chicks around her on the sunny side of the barn to talk over with them the dangers and joys of chickenhood.

Man alone can conjure up a dream-world of the imagination, which carries him far out of drab reality into a fairyland of the symbolizing mind where all his heart's desires may be fulfilled. Through the extraordinary power of symbolization man may project himself backward through the centuries to the very creation of the earth, or forward into times as yet uncreated. From a chair in his own living room man's fertile brain may convey him to any part of the world and into any imaginable company. Through the power of imagination, which is only another way of saying through the power of speech, anyone may become an emperor, an adventurer, a rogue, or any other character of his choice.

"The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven," wrote John Milton. For he knew, as do we all, that the very power of symbolization which can transform dullness into exhilaration can also poison calm, create anxieties, and bedevil us with needless fears. With all the wealth of extra living opened to us through our image-laden minds, we also are unique among all creation in worrying about dangers that don't exist, castigating ourselves for mistakes that are past, and dreading problems that are not ours to solve. Of all the ways in which we are fearfully and wonderfully made, the power of symbolically transmuting and incorporating external reality

into our own private lives is both the most wonderful and the most fearful of all our characteristics.

And all of this is the stuff of conversation. The power of symbolization is the power of speech. Any fancied distinctions between speech and thought are hypothetical and artificial. We think in words, or in symbols that are closely akin to words. To think is to speak low; to speak aloud is to make our thoughts heard and shared. When we are not speaking to be heard by others, we are speaking internally. If not conversing with others, we are constantly communing with ourselves — even when asleep. The symbolic function of our minds is never passive so long as life persists. Our thoughts may not always be profound, or purposive, or clearly formed into recognizable patterns. But thinking, which is inescapably a form of talking, is a living process which restlessly and uninterruptibly continues.

The differences between the vocal apparatus of man and that of the lower animals are not impressive. The larynx (or 'voice box') shows a gradual and continuous evolution from the very low forms of animal life to the vertebrates, and varies little among them. The larynges of sheep, giraffes, monkeys and men are not significantly dissimilar. The lung power with which the vocal folds are vibrated and the resonating chambers in which the sounds are magnified are sufficiently present in all the higher forms of animal life. The tongue, the lips, the teeth, and the nasal cavities, with which sounds are articulated, are by no means confined to man. Yet man alone of all creation has the genuine and unquestioned ability to speak.

This is the gift of conversation — the faculty that clearly and emphatically sets man apart, on a height no other creature can even begin to approach. This is the awesome responsibility which is comprised in the power to talk.

Both symbolization and speech begin in the very earliest period of individual human life. Studies have been made of the speech of human infants during their first thirty days of life. No other babies except human infants delight in babble and baby talk. The *goos* and *gurgles* of human babies contrast meaningfully with the lone silence of other animal infants. Speech — defined as the power to utter word symbols of recognizable significance — may not commence until near the end of the first year. But speech in the sense of giving articulation to images and impulses of the brain surely occurs almost from the moment of human birth. Conscious memory seldom extends backward beyond the third year; but under hypnosis individuals have been

found to have clear, dependable, and numerous memories of symbolized experience implanted in their brain structures during the first half-dozen months of life.

The power of speech is not to be taken lightly. Physically we may identify protoplasm as the basic stuff of which life is formed; but psychologically the essence of life is speech.

The first value and use of conversation, then, is that through talk man lives as a human being. He expresses his own essence. He matures into a personality comprised of memories and judgment. He at least approaches the fulfillment of his allotted destiny. And the better he talks, the more nearly is his destiny achieved.

The second value and use of talk is that it is the basic agent through which our own individualized and unique personality is created. Early in life our nervous system begins to be structured by a tremendous accumulation of symbolizations. For each individual these assume a special pattern of his own. Indelibly and inescapably there is established inside our neural channels a relation to the broad physical and social environment around us.

This imprinted interpretation, which we call our *personality*, is peculiarly and permanently our own. No other can ever be like us, nor can anyone ever depart wholly from the pattern which this structuring assumes. Personality is an ill-defined and vague term. If, however, we take it to mean a double-faced coin — impressed on one side with what an individual believes himself to be, and on the other with what his associates find him to be — the presses from which this coin is minted are the inseparable essences: internal symbolization and external speech.

Despite our immersion in our environment, we receive it dynamically, not passively. We select out of myriad possibilities the events, situations, and people to whom we direct our attention. We take into our nervous structure only selected parts of reality, and what we take in we reshape and re-organize to make it fit comfortably with our own developing internal pattern. What we notice, what we think about, what we talk about: these are the elements from which we construct our own personalities, our own world vision. As social beings, and even more in the private realm of our own internal introspection, we create our own personalities with the intricate instruments of our silent and uttered speech.

Thirdly, just as personality is shaped by the patternizing of internal symbolization through the course of years, so is it made evident to others through talk. Speak, that you may be known; for speech most shows the man. Judgments concerning any individual's personality are formed by his associates partly by the kinds of topics he talks about, the opinions he expresses, the feelings and attitudes he reveals.

Personality is demonstrated by the tones and inflections of the voice — which are dependable indexes to the speaker's degree of self-assurance, responsiveness to

others, and sensitivity to values. Vocabulary is far more than mere mastery of an accumulation of words.

It is, rather, a series of illuminated windows into the nature of the speaker's mind. Our very pronunciation and articulation are clues to our education, culture, social status, and the kind of work we do. Our posture, gestures, and degree of social ease are revelations not alone of our thoughts and feelings, but of our very nature.

The extensiveness, the pertinence, the fluency, the precision, and the adaptability of our conversation are all bill-board announcements of our character, abilities, and temperament. And as an individual's personality changes — as his mind broadens or hardens into ruts of prejudice — as he gains or loses riches — rises or descends the social or vocational scale — always and invariably his speech is the truest and surest external evidence of the internal changes that are taking place.

Personality may involve dress, knowledge, possessions, behavior, health, and appearance. But above and beyond everything else, personality is created by symbolization and expressed by speech. Conversation, accordingly, is not only the basic expression of *humanness*, but it also lies at the heart of the individualized nature of each one of us.

A fourth value and use of conversation is its educational function. What we can learn by direct experience is both drastically limited and enormously expensive. What we can learn by reading is boundless in extent, but is sadly limited in the weakness of its impact on our nervous system. The world's libraries are inexhaustible, but not so is our attention span. Often we read with but a small portion of our attention, till the words blur on the page or their impact blurs on our minds. It is commonplace to finish a book with only vague impressions of what was in it.

But even when one reads with hard attentiveness, the communicative process from the writer to the reader is too incomplete, too one-sided, too attenuated to be deeply effective. The written word is an invaluable supplement to speech, but at best it is only talk mummified and frozen. We read the Bible, but we still need the sermon. We read the textbooks, but we still need the classroom lecture and discussion. Without reading, education could carry us no further forward than the first men were able to proceed before the invention of the written alphabet. But without speech, education could not even commence — and its progress would be unthinkable.

What speech and only speech can do is to form a living system of communication between two or more presently inter-acting personalities. Through speech we can ask questions, challenge replies, and develop patterns of coordinate thought. We can build up an idea through the give and take of exchanged information and attitudes. We can envision within our own minds the process of the growth of an idea.

To a degree, this progression is also possible through direct experience or through reading. But speech is

more pliable than experience and more responsive to our needs than print. We are not searching for an *either-or* approach to education. Our minds, characters, and personalities are developed through a wide variety of methods. But there is no doubt that speech etches deep into the matrix of our being many of the elements that are most essential to our intellectual and emotional growth. Conversation is undoubtedly an educational force far more influential than even direct experience itself.

A fifth value and use of conversation is to demonstrate, and thereby to establish and maintain, our own special position among our associates. This function of talk ought not to be deprecated, for as all students of human nature have noted, among our most sensitive and active drives is the desire to be thought well of by our fellows.

To live is to live in relations. Living proceeds according to standards of comparison. Happiness and misery are not measurable individually but only in terms of contrast with the lot of others or of oneself at other times. Moreover, the attainment of a favorable basis of comparison (either with others or with oneself at an earlier period) is not a cause of relaxation of effort but a positive stimulus to continuing growth.

The lust for superiority is the only lust that is incapable of satiation. Man devises many activities and accumulates many possessions for no other motive than that of impressing himself upon his fellows — of demonstrating his own superiority: of wealth, skill, wit, insight, humaneness or power. Since conversation is so intimately an expression of our essential natures, it is inevitable that one of its functions should be to assist in the universal desire for personal display.

It is no accident that good taste, propriety, courtesy, and gentility are generally admired. For they are intrinsic evidences of valuable and firmly entrenched social virtues. As Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "God will forgive your sins, but neither God nor man will forgive your bad manners."

Wealth may, on occasion, be acquired suddenly and accidentally, as may fame, power, or position. But manners, including especially well-bred speech, are the fruit of slow growth and early nurture. The development of gentility is a process in which it is not easy to turn back the clock. George Bernard Shaw wrote a play, *Pygmalion*, about the feat of remaking a street-girl's entire personality through the improvement of her speech. The achievement was so fanciful as to seem a modern fairy tale. Yet, if it could be done, Shaw properly indicated the most likely means.

Among other values and uses of conversation may be mentioned its utility for the exchange of needful information, its appeal as one route to popularity, and its effects upon vocational success. These may properly be considered by-products of other functions that have been described. It would be a mistake, however, to conclude this catalog of conversational values without em-

phasizing the sheer delight and entertaining qualities of good, animated talk.

There is a pleasure in the juggling and stylistic arrangement of words — a thrill in playing with ideas. Among our deepest satisfactions is that of feeling we are adequately expressing what we really have in mind. Even the veriest conversational neophyte deserves occasionally the pleasure of expressing a thought so well that he will win agreement from the doubters or understanding from the perplexed.

Conversation provides a safe and sane parlor situation for the harmless competition of good-natured argument, that is akin to the simulated fierceness of kittens engaged in mock battle. Just as our bodies need to be vitalized with physical activity, so do our minds need the verbal exercise of mental agility. The harmless contention of enlivened conversation provides opportunity for demonstrations of mild superiority in which no one is injured and all the participants are stimulated. If conversation were of no other use whatsoever, it would retain its popularity simply and purely because it is fun.

One Man's Opinion —

(Continued from Page 16)

sions — on the theory that two thoughts are often better than one.

Finally, the slow speaker gives his listeners plenty of time to exercise their own minds on the topic, and to fill in the voids in the speaker's thought. Hence he gets a degree of credit not only for his own ideas but for theirs, as well.

So for all these reasons mankind, out of many generations of experience, has formulated such aphorisms as, "Still water runs deep," and "Silence is golden." Many a man has come home from a party regretting the many opportunities for silence which he missed.

However, there are many ways of being silent, just as there are many ways of speaking. Silence can be empty or full, dead or vibrant with responsiveness. . . .

For the real master of communication, there is no solid barrier between silence and speech. Listening and talking are interwoven, in his practice, like the warp and the woof of a piece of cloth. When he is listening, he is standing at the threshold of his companion's mind; and when he is talking, he invites his auditor to stand at the doorway of his own thought.

The poor listener is likely to be a poor talker as well. When others are talking, his mind broods apart, only half taking in what they have to say. And when he speaks up, he aims his remarks over or around them, rather than straight to the heart of their concern.

Good talk is like a highway between two busy towns. The traffic runs with equal facility in both directions. If either side of this artery of communication is blocked, the traffic on both sides is snarled.

The effective individual uses silence as he uses talk — with an eager and generous desire to share.

What About the Queen's English?

By Ruth R. Haun

Miss Haun, Assistant Professor of Speech at the University of Pittsburgh, joins the controversy that has raged about Queen Elizabeth's speech. Do you agree with her conclusion?

IN PYGMALION, Liza said, "An old lady has just told me that I speak exactly like Queen Victoria . . ." No doubt, Lord Altrincham, editor of the *National and English Review*, thinks that the young British sovereign, Elizabeth, should speak like a queen. To accomplish the task, we might page Pygmalion-Higgins!

The phonetics expert, Henry Higgins, in George Bernard Shaw's play, *Pygmalion*, taught "correct speech" to Eliza the flower-girl. Within six months, she was accepted by royalty: Eliza passed as a princess! An artist-phonetician can teach the young British queen to sound like a queen. But is she not definitely of our times?

We know that Elizabeth II can not be expected to speak and act like Victoria or Elizabeth I. Great Britain, today, presents the picture of the queen "blurred and confusing — half democratic, half aristocratic, like the society over which she reigns."*

"Where has aristocracy gone in the theatre?" challenged Carolyn LaRue, an instructor of English literature. With nostalgia we consider the plays of Shakespeare, Moliere, Sheridan, Molnar and Wilde. But what of the plays that reflect our times?

More than ever before, our plays are about working people. The heroine may be a stenographer instead of a princess, the hero a salesman instead of a king. Rather than plays of romantic interest, we have plays of domestic problems and social forces, by Eugene O'Neil, Clifford Odets, Tennessee Williams, and Arthur Miller.

Our playwrights are less interested in poetry as a medium of expression. Our modern audiences are less interested in tragedy and less interested in understanding poetry. But the artist-director and actor does discover "the qualities of poetry" in the plays of Eugene O'Neil, Tennessee Williams, William Saroyan, and Thornton Wilder, who have restricted their writings to poetic prose. Few audiences see poetic drama. Fewer treasure the poetry inherent in the drama or carry from the performance the dignity, the charm, the musical cadence of the language.

The plays of William Shakespeare come to us from the Old Vic Theatre, London, and from the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon. And now, the American Shakespeare Festival at Stratford, Connecticut, is establishing an Academy where actors and directors recognize the need to train for speaking Shakespearean verse.

The training of the speaking of verse offers many

values to the speaker and actor. Poetry is a statement on life which gives to our lives purpose and meaning. Poetry gives music to speech, capturing much about man and nature that it would impoverish us to forget. In *The Art of Drama*, Fred B. Millet and Gerald Eades Bentley write, "Certainly one of the major reasons for Shakespeare's domination of the dramatic literature of all time is the basic soundness, wholesomeness, and serenity of the man."

Our mid-twentieth century? There seems little time for poetry, in these times of speed and casual living, the quick accumulation of wealth, the H-bomb, and youth in responsible positions. It is an age of airplanes and television. Our clothes are casual. Our speech is casual, often hurried and ramrod-like or little-girl-or-boy-like.

No doubt, there are changes that we need to make to meet the responsibilities of this age. Peregrine Worsthorne, editorial writer for the Daily Telegraph of London, wrote for the New York Times: "There are, no doubt, changes that the Queen could make in her advisors, her friends and her way of life. She could, for example, take more pains to come to terms with the challenge of television. Now that millions can actually watch her public speeches, it is becoming far more urgent that she should be able to read her prepared speeches as if she really meant what was being said. No one demands she speak extemporaneously, but with training it is possible to avoid the painfully flat delivery that she uses at present."†

It would be well for each one of us to remember what Lord Altrincham said and to apply it to ourselves and the training of young people. "When the queen has lost the bloom of youth, her reputation will depend more than it does now upon her personality. She will have to say things that people will remember and do things on her own initiative . . ."‡

And, without a doubt, we should remember what Professor Higgins said to Eliza, "Remember you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and The Bible: and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon."

* Worsthorne, Peregrine, "Elizabeth II Can't Be Elizabeth I", *The New York Times Magazine*, August 18, 1957, p. 62.

† Ibid, p. 63.

‡ "Her Majesty's Tweedy Enclave", *Time*, August 12, 1957, p. 21.

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TODAY'S SPEECH

Index to Volumes I-V (1953-1957)

Prepared by Alan L. McLeod

- Adams, J. Q., II, i, 33(n.)
 Advertising, II, ii, 9-11
 Alfano, R. J., III, ii, 28
 Angell, C. S., "Philosophy and Persuasion," III, iv, 26-29
 Archer, R. B., "Stage Fright: A Select Bibliography," II, i, 27-28
 Arnold, C. C., "Trends in Speech in the Eastern States," I, i, 24-27; I, ii, 25-27; II, i, 24-26; II, ii, 25-29; III, i, 24-27; IV, i, 25-29; IV, iv, 32-34
 Apfelbaum, S., "The Lawyer in Conference With His Client," II, iv, 15-16
 d'Aquino, Felipe ("Tokyo Rose"), V, i, 22-23
 Auctioneering, IV, ii, 22-24
 Audiences, predisposed, IV, iii, 7-9
 Audiology, *See* Hearing
 Automation, IV, i, 12-13; 14-18
 Barbara, D. A., "The Formidable Imprints of Speech," III, iv, 3-7; "On Listening: The Role of the Ear in Psychic Life," V, i, 12-15; "The Need for a Simplified Language," V, ii, 7-10
 Barnard, R. H., "Functionalizing Human Relations in Business," III, i, 14-18
 Barnes, A. S., "Bell's Talks to the Public," IV, i, 9-11
 Baskerville, B., "Joe McCarthy: Brief-case Demagogue," II, iii, 8-15
 Bauer, M. G., "Are You Saying it Right?", II, ii, 2-5
 Baxter, B., "Industrial Relations Techniques," I, ii, 2-5
 Bell, A. G., IV, i, 9
 Bell Telephone of Pennsylvania, IV, i, 9-11
 Berquist, G. F., "An Ancient Who is not Antiquated," II, ii, 11-13
 Bishop, C. D., and Kosh, Zelda H., "How to Use Television to Publicize Your Organization," IV, iv, 25-28
 Blanding, E., "A New Approach to an Old Problem," V, i, 16-18
 Boehlert, B., III, ii, 28
 Book Reviews, I, i, 31-32; I, ii, 30-32; II, i, 28-31; II, ii, 30-32; III, i, 28-30; III, ii, 32-34; IV, i, 30-33; V, ii, 35-37; V, iii, 31-33
 Bormann, E. G., "Ghostwriting Agencies," IV, iii, 20-23
 Brasted, F. K., "Speech and Economic Efficiency," I, ii, 7-8
 Brigrance, W. N., "Ghostwriting Before F. D. R. and the Radio," IV, iii, 10-12
 Brigham, G., "Public Opinion on the Eve of World War II," II, iv, 22-25
 Brillhart, J. K., "What Shall I Talk About?" V, iv, 19-20
 Broadcasting, *See* Radio
 Brooks, P., II, i, 33(n.)
 Bronte, Emily, III, ii, 16-17
 Browning, Elizabeth B., III, ii, 15-16
 Brownstone, P., II, iv, 3-4
 Burnight, R., "A Stage Fright Sufferer Strikes Back," V, iv, 7-8
 Cain, E., "Is Senate Debate Significant?" III, ii, 10-12; "Why Take That Speech Course?" III, iii, 11-12
 Callaghan, C. J., "Are We Really Teaching Them to Communicate?", II, iii, 32-25; "Other Means of Persuasion," III, iv, 26
 Canaday, R. F., "The Significance of Speech in Industry," II, iii, 20-21
 Carter, E. S., "Significant Research in the Eastern States," II, ii, 29-30; "Making Progress With Speech," IV, ii, 3-6; "If Irving Lee Were Here?", V, iii, 15-16
 Censorship, III, i, 5-6; III, iv, 19-21
 Chairmanship, IV, iv, 19-20
 Chapman, H. H., "Persuasion and Sweet Talk," V, iii, 5
 Christophersen, M. G., "Teaching Speech in the Military Bases," I, i, 10-12
 Churchill, W. S., II, i, 1; II, iv, 17-21
 Clark, K. B., "Racial Attitudes: Words *versus* Deeds," I, ii, 20-22
 Cobin, M. T., "Why Can We Go to the Theatre?", II, iii, 20-21
 Cockrell, W., III, iii, 29
 Coleridge, S. T., II, i, 33(n.)
 Communication, IV, iii, 3-6
 — industrial: II, iii, 23-26; IV, iv, 3-4
 — media: III, i, 6, 8
 — schools of, II, i, 10-11
 — surveys: III, iv, 10-13
 Conference, II, ii, 6-9; II, iv, 15-16; III, iii, 3-5; III, iv, 8-9
 Confidence, II, iii, 1-7
 Conversation, IV, i, 6-7; V, iv, 31-33
 Criticism, III, iii, 13-14
 Crocker, L., "Make the Illustration Linger," IV, i, 3-5; "The Strategy of Parliamentary Procedure," IV, iv, 17-18
 Dance, F. E., "Speech Education for Physicians and Dentists," V, i, 23-25
 Davis, J., II, i, 33(n.)
 Dansereau, J., "My Stuttering Problem," III, i, 31
 D'Amelio, L., III, ii, 30
 Deafness, *See* Hearing
 Debate, III, i, 5-6; V, i, 4, 32-34
 — college: IV, i, 29
 — House of Commons: V, ii, 21-23
 — judging: IV, ii, 28-31; V, i, 29-31
 — parliamentary: V, ii, 21-27; V, iii, 7-8
 — senate: III, ii, 10-12
 Demogeot, W. R., "Public Speaking Texts," II, i, 30-31
 De Vinney, R. N., "Words Use Men," 18-19
 Dickinson, Emily, II, ii, 22-23
 Diller, N. R., "Oral Communications in Industry," II, iii, 23-26
 Discussion, II, iv, 2; III, iii, 3-5; V, i, 25-26; V, ii, 5-6
 Doctor, P. V., "Overcoming the Handicaps of Deafness," II, iv, 8-10
 Drum, D. D., "The Debate Judge as a Machine," IV, ii, 28-31
 Dubbins, D., II, iv, 2

NOTE: Vol. I consisted of two numbers, each subsequent volume of four.

TODAY'S SPEECH

- Duncan, W., "Needed: Schools of Communication," II, i, 10-11
- Dunn, Harriet M., "Helping Paul to Hear," II, i, 21-24
- Eisenstadt, A., "Today's Speech Books in Review," I, i, 31-32; I, ii, 30-32; II, i, 28-30; II, ii, 30-32; II, iii, 29-31; III, i, 28-30; III, ii, 32-34; IV, i, 30-33; V, ii, 35-37; V, iii, 31-33
- Emerson, R. W., IV, ii, 6-9
- Ersine, A. H., "Why Do We Go to the Theatre?", II, ii, 14-16
- Fair, E. W., "Getting the Most out of Those Meetings," III, iv, 8-9
- Ferdonnet, P., V, i, 20-22
- Fleishmann, E. E., "Oral Interpretation and Growth of Personality," II, i, 4-8
- Forensics, (See also: Debate, Discussion), IV, i, 29; IV, iv, 34
- Foster, E. S., "Radio and T.V.," V, i, 6-7; V, iv, 8
- Freely, A. J., "Speech Among Bankers," I, ii, 8-9
- Friedman, R. P., "Why Not Debate Persuasively?", V, i, 32-34
- Geiger, D., "The Conservatism of Modern Poetry," V, ii, 10-12
- General Education, I, i, 27
- General Semantics, IV, ii, 3-6; V, iii, 15-16ff.
- Ghostwriting, II, i, 17-19; IV, iii, 10-25
- Golightly, M. C., "Maneuverability: A Skill Every Speaker Needs," V, iii, 13-14
- Gray, G. W., "The Public Speaking Review," I, i, 5-7
- Griswold, A. W., "Our Tongue-Tied Democracy," V, iv, 20-30
- Group discussion, I, i, 18-19
- Group dynamics, III, iii, 21-28
- Gunderson, R. G., "Presidential Canvass: Log-cabin Style," V, ii, 19-20
- Haakenson, R., "Broadcasting: 32-Year Old Gargantua," I, i, 8-9 ff; "Report on Television Speech-Making," II, i, 11-16
- Haun, Ruth R., "Creative Listening," I, ii, 18-20; "World Theatre," IV, i, 20-22; "What About the Queen's English?", V, iv, 34
- Hearing, II, i, 21-24; II, iv, 8-10; V, i, 7
- Henning, J. H., "How to Prepare a Talk," I, ii, 12-15; "How to Deliver A Speech," III, i, 3-4; "The Need for Speech Education," V, i, 3
- Henry, R., "The Integrity of the Listener," V, iii, 25-28
- Hicks, Helen G., "Three American Ladies of Poesy," II, ii, 20-24; "Three British Ladies of Poesy," III, ii, 15-19
- Hill, H. T., "Bringing Figures to Life," V, iii, 11-12
- History and Speech, III, iv, 22-25
- Hogstrom, H. K., "The Wind of Controversy," V, iv, 21-28
- Holtzman, P. D., "Open Letter to a Beginning Speech Student," III, i, 1
- Homiletics, V, i, 8-11
- Hoogstraal, W., "What About the Auctioneer?", IV, ii, 22-24
- Hopkins, M., "A Study of Semantics in Industry," IV, i, 12-13
- Hostettler, G. F., "The Use and Abuse of Notes," III, i, 12-13
- Human relations, III, i, 14-18
- Illustration, IV, i, 3-5
- India, discussion in, V, iii, 7-8
- Industrial relations, I, ii, 2-8; II, iv, 5-7; III, i, 14-18; III, iii, 3-5; IV, iv, 3-4
- Irvin, C. E., "Effective Teaching Is Effective Salesmanship," IV, i, 18-19
- Irvin, R. L., "Reading on Records," II, iv, 31-32; "A Dying What?", IV, i, 7-8
- Isocrates, II, ii, 11-13
- Jespersen, O., II, iv, 14(n.)
- Joyce, W., ("Lord Haw Haw"), V, i, 20-21
- Jungman, Carol, "An Open Letter to Ogden Nash," (verse), V, iii, 6
- Karstetter, A., "Group Dynamics as a Factor in Speech Communication," III, iii, 21-28
- Keltner, J. W., "Groupthink and Individual Thinking," V, ii, 5-6
- Klee, B. B., "Circular Seating in the Theatre," II, iv, 29-30
- Klevans, E. H., "Confess!", V, iv, 13-15
- Konigsberg, Evelyn, "Speech in New York Schools," IV, i, 23-24; "The Fallacy of the First Name," V, i, 1
- Korzybski, A., IV, ii, 3-6
- Kosh, Zelda H., See Bishop, C. D.
- Kramer, Magdalene, "History of the Speech Association of the Eastern States," I, i, 1-4; "Oral Interpretation of Literature," V, i, 4-5
- Kruger, A. N., "The Debate Judge as a Critical Thinker," V, i, 29-31
- Láng, R. A., "The Modern French Parliament," V, ii, 25-27
- Language, IV, iii, 3-6; V, i, 2, 18-19; V, ii, 7-10; V, iv, 34
- Lee, I., "Leadership Without Imposition," III, iii, 3-5; V, iii, 15-16 ff
- Lefkowitz, E. F., "Speech Training and the Naval Air Intelligence Officer," V, iii, 21-22
- Lewis, J. M., "Why Group Discussion in the Liberal Arts Curriculum?", I, i, 18-19; I, ii, 24(n.)
- Lewis, W. D., "Public Speaking: Source and Force in History," III, iv, 22-25; "The Predisposed Audience," IV, iii, 7-9
- Listening, I, ii, 18-20; IV, iii, 5-6; V, i, 12-15; V, iii, 25-28
- Long, H., II, iii, 16-19
- Loudspeakers, V, ii, 28-29
- Lowell, Amy, II, ii, 21-22
- McCalmon, G., "Theatre," V, i, 5-6
- McCarthy, J., II, iii, 8-15
- McFarland, Kathryn B., "The Panel — A Pooling of Ignorance?", V, i, 25-6
- McLeod, A. L., "The Ethics of Radio Announcing: A Dilemma," V, ii, 30-31
- Mackey, D. R., "War on the Air: Three Traitors," V, i, 20-23; "War on the Air: Nazi Style," V, ii, 32-34
- Maclay, W., I, i, 20-23
- Mansuy, F., "Spot that Demagogue," IV, ii, 6-9
- Marsh, G. E., "Oral Interpretation and a Philosophy of Liberal Education," III, i, 19-21
- Mason, P., "The Legal Side of Parliamentary Procedure," IV, iv, 9-14
- Maxay, S. S., III, iii, 31
- Meetings, (See also Conference), II, ii, 4-5
- Merritt, F., "William Maclay: First Senator from Pennsylvania," I, i, 20-23; "How is Your Child's Speech?", II, i, 19-21; "Teedyuscung: Speaker for the Delawares," III, iv, 14-18
- Millard, R. T., "Rehabilitation Through Integration," III, ii, 13-14
- Mitchell, J. D., "Theatre of Western Europe: 1953," II, ii, 16-20
- Morrison, I. G., "Behind the Symbol: An Idea or Babble of Sounds?", IV, iii, 3-6
- Mullendore, J. M., "Speech Correction and Audiology," V, i, 7
- Nash, O., V, iii, 5
- Nelson, H. E., "Educational Television," III, iii, 13-14
- Ness, O. G., "Social Psychology and Persuasion," III, iv, 29-32
- Newman, Cardinal, II, iii, 28(n.)
- Nilson, T. R., "How to Make a Communications Survey," III, iv, 10-13
- Nobel Prize, II, i, 1
- Noble, C. C., "A New Deal in Preaching," V, i, 8-11

TODAY'S SPEECH

- O'Brien, H. J., II, iv, 3; "How to Think Creatively," V, iv, 17-19
- O'Brien, J. F., "Don't Shove, Mr. Knowles: Parliamentary Law is Basically Sound," II, i, 2-4; "The Chairman and His Job," IV, iv, 19-20
- O'Connor, Lillian, "Public Speaking in the Philippines," II, iv, 26-28
- Ohnmacht, R., "Pundits or Parrots," V, iv, 6
- Oliver, E. S., "Public Discussion in India," V, iii, 7-8
- Oliver, R. T., "Across the Typewriter," I, i, 1; I, ii, 1; "A Time for Solemn Thought," II, iii, 32; "The Lawyer and the Community," II, iv, 11-14; "Reactions of Our Readers," II, iv, 32; "One Man's Opinion," IV, ii, 32-33; V, iii, 23-24; V, iv, 16f.; "Talkers All: Our Human Destiny," V, iv, 31-33
- Ontassete, Chief, II, ii, 5(n.)
- Oral Interpretation, II, i, 4-8; II, ii, 20-24; II, iv, 31-32; III, i, 19-21; III, ii, 15-19; V, i, 4-5
- Padrow, B., "All Hail the Collective Ego," V, iii, 29-30
- Parliamentary procedure, II, i, 2-4; IV, iv, 2, 7-20
- Perkins, Flora, "How to Argue With a Red-Headed Woman," V, iv, 5
- Perkins, L. S., "Psychological Research in Speech," III, i, 22-23 f.
- Persuasion, III, iv, 26-34; V, iii, 5
- Philippines, public speaking in, II, iv, 26-28
- Phillips, D. C., "Significant Research in Speech in the Eastern States," I, i, 28-30; I, ii, 28-29; II, i, 27-28; "Oral Communications in Industry," IV, iv, 3-4; "Public Address, Debate and Discussion," V, i, 4
- Pirk, P., III, ii, 29
- Poetry, I, ii, 20-24; III, ii, 15-19; V, ii, 10-12
- Preaching, V, i, 8-11
- Propaganda, I, i, 13-17; V, i, 20-23; V, ii, 32-34
- Psychology and Speech, III, i, 23 ff.; V, iii, 29-30
- Publicity, television, IV, iv, 25-29
- Public opinion, II, ii, 9-11; II, iv, 22-25
- Public relations, I, i, 30
- Public speaking, V, i, 4
- adaptation in: V, iii, 13-14; V, iv, 9-10
 - audiences: IV, iii, 7-9
 - banquet: III, iii, 7-10
 - delivery: I, ii, 16-17; II, ii, 2-3; II, iii, 1-7; III, i, 3-4; III, ii, 7-9 ff.; III, iii, 7-10
 - effective: IV, iii, 24-27, 31-32
 - ghostwriting: See Ghostwriting
 - illustration: IV, i, 3-5
 - impromptu: I, ii, 10-12
 - length: V, iii, 7-8
 - notes: III, i, 7-8
 - objectivity: IV, ii, 25-27
 - preparation: I, ii, 12-15; V, iv, 17-19
 - presidential: V, ii, 19-20; V, iii, 10-15
 - problems overcome: II, iv, 1-4; III, ii, 28-30; V, iv, 5
 - professional: V, i, 23-25
 - rebuttal: V, iii, 3-5
 - statistics: V, iii, 11-12
 - S.A.E.S. Contest Code: IV, iv, 29-31
 - topics: V, iv, 19-20
- Public Speaking Review, The, I, i, 5-7
- Quel, S. B., "The Oral Argument of an Appeal," II, ii, 26-28
- Racial attitudes, I, ii, 20-22
- Radio, I, i, 8 ff.; V, i, 6-7
- announcing ethics: V, ii, 30-31
 - drama: IV, i, 7-8; IV, iii, 27-30
 - propaganda: V, i, 20-23; V, ii, 32-34
- Rank, V., "Rationalization as a Factor in Communication," IV, ii, 10-21
- Rapport, III, i, 11-13 ff.; III, iii, 17-20
- Rationalization, IV, ii, 10-21
- Ray, R. F., "Ghostwriting in Presidential Campaigns," V, iii, 13-15
- Reager, R. C., "The Speech of the Moment," I, ii, 10-12
- Reeves, J. W., "Nominations and Elections in Voluntary Organizations," IV, iv, 15-16
- Research in Speech in the Eastern States, I, i, 28-30; I, ii, 28-29; II, i, 27-28; II, ii, 29-30; III, i, 22-23
- Rice, G. P., "What Do Students Care About Freedom of Speech?", III, iv, 19-21; "Lawful Use of Loud-speaking Devices," V, ii, 28-29
- Roach, Helen, "Does History Repeat Itself?", I, ii, 22-24
- Robert, H., IV, iv, 12-14
- Rode, S., III, ii, 28
- Rosenthal, D., III, iii, 31
- Rossetti, Christina, III, ii, 17-19
- Runkel, H., "How To Meet Unexpected Speech Situations," V, iv, 9-10
- Ryan, C. T., "Language of the Gown," IV, iii, 33-34
- Ryan, E. H., "That First Awful Minute," I, ii, 16-17
- S.A.E.S., See Speech Association of the Eastern States
- Salesmanship, IV, i, 18-19; IV, iv, 21-24
- Sample, W. D., "Impro-Drama: A New Concept for Television Entertainment," V, iii, 17-19
- Sapir, E., I, ii, 17(n.)
- Scanlan, R., "Advertising, Rhetoric and Public Opinion," II, ii, 9-11; "Two Views of Propaganda," I, i, 13-14
- Schmidt, R. N., "Another Look at Rapport," III, ii, 25-27; "Close That Door," II, i, 8-9; "Developing Rapport in the Classroom," III, i, 11-13; "Maybe so — but Count me Out," II, ii, 4-5; "How Long Should You Speak — and Why?", V, iii, 7-8
- Sedgler, C. A., III, ii, 1; IV, i, 34
- Semantics, (See also General Semantics), IV, i, 12-13
- Sherman, Leah, "Conversation: The Give and Take of Ideas," IV, i, 6-7; "Word of Mouth," V, iv, 27
- Simpson, R. S., "Speech and Diplomacy," V, ii, 13-17
- Sirois, L. M., "Expression: A Trinity," III, ii, 7-9 ff.
- Slang, IV, iii, 33-34
- Smith, C. D., "Literary Criticism and Persuasion," III, iv, 33-34; "Debate in the House of Commons," V, ii, 21-23
- Smith, D. K., "The Speech-Writing Team in a State Political Campaign," IV, iii, 16-19
- Smith, G. P., II, iv, 1
- Speech, (See also Public Speaking, Meetings, Conference, Debate, Discussion, Speech Correction, etc.)
- auctioneering: IV, ii, 22-24
 - bankers': I, ii, 8-9
 - children's: II, i, 19-21
 - certification of teachers of: II, ii, 3; IV, i, 28-29
 - congressional: III, ii, 10-12; IV, iv, 5-7; V, iv, 29-30
 - diplomatic: III, ii, 20-22; V, ii, 13-17
 - disorders: III, iv, 3-7
 - freedom of: III, iv, 19-21
 - ghostwriting: II, i, 17-19; IV, iii, 10-25
 - industrial: II, ii, 28-29; II, iii, 20-21, 23-26; III, iv, 10-13
 - legal: II, iii, 26-28; II, iv, 11-16
 - personality: III, i, 9-10; III, ii, 3-6
 - research: I, i, 28-30; I, ii, 28-29; II, i, 27-28; II, ii, 29-30; III, i, 22-23
 - television: II, i, 11-16; IV, i, 25; V, iii, 17-19
 - teaching: I, i, 10-12, 24-27; I, ii, 22-27; II, i, 1, 10-11, 24-25; II, ii, 25-29; III, i, 1-2, 11-13 ff.; III, iii, 5-6, 32-35; IV, i, 23-24
- Speech Association of the Eastern States,
- convention program, 1954: II, ii, 2; 1957: V, ii, 2
 - history of: I, i, 1-4
 - public speaking context code: IV, iv, 29-31

TODAY'S SPEECH

- Speech correction, III, i, 31; III, iv, 6-7; IV, i, 28-29; V, i, 7
- Speech education, III, iii, 11-12; V, i, 3-7, 23-25; IV, iv, 33; V, iii, 21-22, 29-30
- Stage fright, II, i, 27-28; V, iv, 7-8
- Sturgis, Alice F., "American Voluntary Associations: Our Informal Government," IV, iv, 7-9
- Stuttering, III, i, 31
- Tacey, W. S., "Banquet Speaking," III, iii, 7-10
- Teaching, III, iii, 5-6; IV, i, 18-19; IV, iv, 21-24
- Teedyuscung, Chief, III, iv, 14-18
- Television, IV, iv, 32-33; V, i, 6-7; V, iii, 17-19
— educational: II, i, 25-26; III, iii, 13-14; IV, i, 25
— publicity: IV, iv, 25-28
- Thayer, K. C., II, iv, 4
- Theatre, II, ii, 14-20, 26-27; II, iii, 20-21; II, iv, 29-30; IV, i, 20-22; V, i, 5-6
— educational: IV, i, 28; IV, iv, 34
- Thorne, E. J., "Teaching is Not Salesmanship," III, iii, 5-6; "Automation, Education and Speech," IV, i, 14-18; "Teaching, 1, 2; Salesmanship, 1, 2," IV, iv, 21-24
- Toastmasters International, V, i, 16-18
- Tobal, Mary, L. M., "Personality Building Through Speech Training," III, i, 9-10
- "Tokyo Rose," See d'Aquino, Felipe
- Tribble, O. H., "Speech and the Will to Work," II, iv, 5-7
- Tucholsky, C., "How to Make a Bad Speech," IV, iii, 31-32
- Twain, M., I, i, 14(n.)
- van Zandt, J. E., "What a Congressman Needs to Know about Parliamentary Procedure," IV, iv, 5-7
- Walser, F., "Neglected Factors in East-West Negotiations," III, ii, 20-22
- Walter, O. M., "Developing Confidence," II, iii, 1-7; "What You Are Speaks so Loud," III, ii, 3-6
- Warner, K. W., "Winston Churchill's Proposal for a United Europe," II, iv, 17-21
- Washington, G., II, i, 33(n.)
- Weldon, L. W., "Another Look at Rapport," III, iii, 23-25
- West, R., "The S Bomb," II, iii, 1; "Your Speech and the Stolen Towels: A Parable," V, ii, 3-4; "The Secrets Revealed," V, iv, 3-4
- Wiksell, M. J., "Capitalizing on Criticism," III, iii, 13-14; "On Being Objective in Speaking," IV, ii, 25-27; "How to Talk Back to Someone who is Mad," V, iii, 3-5
- Williamson, W., III, iii, 31
- Wills, E., III, iii, 30
- Woods, D. L., "Is Radio Drama a Dying Art?", III, iii, 17-20; "Radio Drama Revisited," IV, iii, 27-30; "And that Reminds Me of . . .", V, iv, 11-12
- Wylie, Elinor, II, ii, 23-24
- Youngerman, H. C., "Propaganda and Public Address," I, i, 15-17
- Zelko, H. P., "Managing Your Conference," II, ii, 6-8; "How to Make an Effective Speech," IV, iii, 24-27

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